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## Alfred, Lord Tennyson

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**POETICAL WORKS** *Cambridge Edition.* With a Biographical Sketch and Notes by WILLIAM J. RULFE, Indexes to Titles and First Lines, a Portrait, and engraved Title-Page, with a Vignette of Tennyson's Home in the Isle of Wight. Large crown 8vo, gilt top, \$2.00.

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*J. Langson*





THE POETIC AND  
DRAMATIC WORKS OF ALFRED  
LORD TENNYSON

**Household Edition**

WITH ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVEN  
ILLUSTRATIONS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY  
*The Riverside Press Cambridge*

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

A *Household Edition* of Tennyson's Poems was published by the predecessors of the present publishers in 1871, and advantage was at that time taken of Moxon's English edition with illustrations by artists, mainly of the Pre-Raphaelite school, to include a number of these designs; to these were added designs by American artists who worked in much the same spirit. But that edition comprised somewhat less than half the present number of Tennyson's poems, and from time to time, as successive volumes of poems were republished by arrangement with the English publishers, their contents were added to the *Household Edition* and accompanied by new designs by English and American artists.

The recent issue by the publishers of the *Cambridge Edition* of Tennyson's poetic and dramatic works, in which the text was very carefully determined, has induced them to reissue the *Household Edition* on practically the same lines as the original edition, but with entirely new plates of larger type, and with such a revision of the illustrations as was possible under the improved conditions. The text is that of the *Cambridge Edition*, scrupulously followed. A brief biographic sketch has been provided, and suitable indexes have been furnished. The illustrations have been selected with great care from the best designs made to accompany the poems by English, American, and French artists, and have been reinforced also by portraits and representations of historic buildings. In repeating the important series by Millais, Rossetti, La Farge, Vedder, and others, recourse has been had to early impressions, and sometimes to the original blocks, to secure clearness of line and freshness of color. The total number of illustrations has been largely increased, and the result is the most thoroughly illustrated Tennyson thus far offered to the public.

The large body of Tennyson's poetic and dramatic works, when thus increased in bulk by so many illustrations, makes the problem of producing an agreeable single volume very difficult; but by the choice of a compact page, the use of a thin opaque paper, and great care in printing, the publishers trust they have at least come near the solution of the problem.

BOSTON : *Autumn*, 1899.





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*From an amateur photograph, about 1855, in the*  
*Lenox Library*

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

ALFRED TENNYSON was born August 6, 1809, at Somersby, a little village in Lincolnshire, England. His father was the rector of the parish; his mother, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Fytche, and whose character he touched in his poem 'Isabel,' was the daughter of a clergyman; and one of his brothers, who later took the name of Charles Turner, was also a clergyman. The religious nature in the poet was a constant element in his poetry, and with it may be named an abiding love of the natural world, which yielded its secrets to an observation which was singularly keen, and a philosophic reflection which made Tennyson reveal in his poetry an apprehension of the laws of life, akin to what Darwin was disclosing in his contemporaneous career.

In his early 'Ode to Memory,' Tennyson has translated into verse the consciousness which woke in him in the secluded fields of his Lincolnshire birth-place. For companionship he had the large circle of his own home, for he was one of eight brothers and four sisters; and in that little society there was not only the miniature world of sport and study, but a very close companionship with the large world of imagination. They had their jousts and tournaments, their revivification of knightly deeds in their sports, and Alfred was the improvisatore who gathered the other children about him and regaled them with tales of wonder, drawn partly from his reading, partly from his own fertile fancy.

He had, moreover, the favoring poetic sympathy of two at any rate in the circle. From very childhood he lisped in numbers, for the numbers came on every wind, and his brothers Frederick and Charles, the one two years, the other one year his senior, were also given to poetic composition, so that after Charles and Alfred had been at school in Louth a short time, the brothers put their verses together and induced the local booksellers and printers, Messrs. Jackson, to publish the book under the title *Poems by Two Brothers*. Frederick Tennyson indeed contributed four poems; the rest were divided between Charles and Alfred, but in the absence of exact data, the present Lord Tennyson, though he had memoranda as well as the memory of his uncles to rely upon, was unable, when he reprinted the volume sixty years after its first publication, to determine exactly the authorship of all the poems. The verses, which are preserved in the *Cambridge Edition* of Tennyson's poems, are interesting as indicating the careful scholarship of the boys and the impression made on them by Byron, rather than for any marked poetic quality.

Frederick Tennyson was already at Cambridge when Charles and Alfred went up to that University in 1828, and were matriculated at Trinity College. Alfred Tennyson acquired there, as so many other notable Englishmen, not only intellectual discipline, but that close companionship with picked men which is engendered by the half monastic seclusion of the English university.

There was a company which from its number was dubbed the Apostles, to which he found entrance, and here he met men who influenced his early life and in a few instances were close companions during his whole career. Chief among these was the brilliant Sterling, and others were James Spedding, the expositor of Bacon, Trench, afterward Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Monckton Milnes, better known as Lord Houghton, Dean Alford, W. H. Brookfield the intimate friend of Thackeray, J. M. Kemble, and Kinglake, the author of *Eothen* and historian of the Crimean War. Among these men, growing into manhood during the stirring times of Reform, Tennyson drew in the long breaths of political freedom and loyalty to the highest ideals of English life, which were later to find expression in *Maud* and the historical dramas. He was under the influence also of Maurice, whose friendship was a lifelong inspiration to him; and perhaps more potent than all other influences was that which sprang from his intimacy with Arthur Hallam.

This young collegian, a son of the historian, was looked upon as a man of great promise who had already indeed demonstrated his power by writings of a mature order. His friendship with Tennyson brought him to the poet's home, and he became engaged to Tennyson's sister Emily. The two men shared their studies and hopes and dreams, and when in 1830 Tennyson published *Poems chiefly Lyrical*, Hallam came forward with a review of the volume in *The Englishman's Magazine*. In 1832 the volume was followed by *Poems, by Alfred Tennyson*, and then there was a silence of ten years. Hallam died in 1833, and his death seems to have so stirred the depths of the poet's nature that he retired into a life almost of seclusion in which he confronted the problems of life and eternity much as many a reformer or preacher has girded up his loins in the wilderness.

It must not be supposed that this decade was one of brooding alone. At first indeed, in the privacy of the Somersby rectory he devoted himself with systematic industry to study rather than to composition. Once in a while he used his little hoard of savings in a visit to London to see his college friends living there, and he made a journey also into the Lake country. Yet he could not long withhold himself from his vocation, and little by little he showed poems to his friends and received their criticism. In 1842 appeared a fuller volume of *Poems*, in 1847 *The Princess* was published, and in 1850 appeared the great elegy *In Memoriam A. H. H.*, which set the seal upon his poetic reputation.

His livelihood, during these years, had been mainly a small sum which had come from his grandfather, his father having died in 1831, but now there was sufficient security in the income from his writings to enable him to renew an engagement with Emily Sellwood, whose younger sister had married Charles Tennyson, and who herself on that occasion was bridesmaid, with Alfred Tennyson as groomsman. The marriage took place in the same month that *In Memoriam* was published, and the wedded life which followed was the great anchorage of the poet's soul. In after life he said: 'The peace of God came into my life before the altar when I wedded her.' He testified of his affection when he published the lyrical dedication to the *Enoch Arden* volume, beginning:

'Dear, dear and true, — no truer Time himself'

and also the lines 'June bracken and heather' which introduce the *Ennui* volume. The same year Tennyson was made Poet Laureate in successorship to Wordsworth.

Tennyson regarded his post as Poet Laureate in the light of a high poetic and patriotic ardor. When he was meditating his first laureate poem 'To the Queen,' he was thinking especially of a stanza in which 'the empire of Wordsworth should be asserted: for he was a representative Poet Laureate, such a poet as kings should honor, and such an one as would do honor to kings;—making the period of a reign famous by the utterance of memorable words concerning that period.' The laurel 'greener from the brows of him that utter'd nothing base,' was indeed worn with dignity and grace, and in the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, and the spirited 'Britons, guard your own,' 'The Third of February,' 'Hands all round,' and 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,' Tennyson showed the passion of the English patriot in a manner which has been neither echoed nor eclipsed in the verses which in a similar spirit have been contributed by Rudyard Kipling in recent years to *The Times*. But it was in *Maud* that Tennyson concentrated the feeling which was roused in his nature by the compromise which he believed the commercial spirit of his day was seeking to effect between national honor and national prosperity; and it is not strange that this poem, with its almost incoherent cries, should have seemed to many of his countrymen as almost the utterance of an insane man.

The record of Tennyson's career from this time forward is marked by the successive publication of his works. He changed his home more than once, partly in obedience to an almost morbid fear of intrusion; but a family grew up about him, and his domestic life was one of great serenity and beauty. He travelled little out of his own country, and he was not greatly given to letter writing; but he numbered amongst devoted friends some of the greatest Englishmen of his time. His son has printed the letters which passed between him and the Queen, showing how genuine and deep was the emotion which each excited in the other. He was warmly attached to Robert Browning; the Duke of Argyll was an intimate companion, and Edward FitzGerald, with his whimsical hero worship, laid his tribute with affectionate constancy at Tennyson's feet.

When in later life he was now and then a figure in London society, he cared most for the companionship which, in the Metaphysical Society, brought him in close contact with Dean Stanley, Cardinal Manning, James Martineau, Edmund Lushington, and many others among ecclesiastics, Carpenter, Huxley, Tyndall and other scientists, and Froude, Bagehot, Pattison, Harrison, Hutton, men of letters and learning.

The *Idylls of the King*, published in 1859, a less complete group than that now included under the title, continued his great poetic line, which was also in its purpose an epitome of the greater England of his soul's allegiance, but the most notable turn in his poetic career was when, in 1875, nearly fifty years after his earliest venture in verse, he published his drama of *Queen Mary*. He had no thought of writing what are known as closet dramas. The dramatic instinct in him was powerful, even though it had thus far shown itself



mainly in lyric form, and from this time forward he gave the best of his power to writing for the stage. With slight exceptions, these dramas are interpretations of English history. They are serious studies, and a serious attempt was made to give them proper stage presentation; but the conditions of the theatre in England and it may be said also Tennyson's too archaic conception of treatment seemed to stand in the way of anything like popular recognition.

In 1884 the Queen raised him to the peerage, to which twice before he had been invited, and he became Baron of Aldworth and Farringford. The elevation was in the direct line of English tradition, and the nobility of the kingdom was enriched by his succession. He continued to publish until his death. Indeed, the final volume of his poems was in press at the time of his death, which occurred October 7, 1892. He was buried in the 'Poet's Corner' of Westminster Abbey, on the 12th of the same month.

## TO THE QUEEN

*Revered, beloved — O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria, — since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;*

*And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme  
If aught of ancient worth be there ;*

*Then — while a sweeter music wakes,  
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,  
Where all about your palace-walls  
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes —*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;  
For tho' the faults were thick as dust  
In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness. May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day !  
May children of our children say,  
'She wrought her people lasting good ;*

*' Her court was pure ; her life serene ;  
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;*

*'And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*'By shaping some august decree  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'*

*March, 1851.*



' Where Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die '

## JUVENILIA

### CLARIBEL

#### A MELODY

##### I

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall ;  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

##### II

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone ;  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone ;  
At midnight the moon cometh,  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throistle lispeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling runnel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

## NOTHING WILL DIE

WHEN will the stream be weary of  
flowing  
Under my eye?  
When will the wind be weary of  
blowing  
Over the sky?  
When will the clouds be weary of  
fleeting?  
When will the heart be weary of  
beating?  
And nature die?  
Never, O, never, nothing will die;  
The stream flows,  
The wind blows,  
The cloud fleets,  
The heart beats,  
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die;  
All things will change  
Thro' eternity.  
'T is the world's winter;  
Autumn and summer  
Are gone long ago;  
Earth is dry to the centre,  
But spring, a new comer,  
A spring rich and strange,  
Shall make the winds blow  
Round and round,  
Thro' and thro',  
Here and there,  
Till the air  
And the ground  
Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made;  
It will change, but it will not  
fade.  
So let the wind range;  
For even and morn  
Ever will be  
Thro' eternity.  
Nothing was born;  
Nothing will die;  
All things will change.

## ALL THINGS WILL DIE

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its  
flowing  
Under my eye;  
Warmly and broadly the south winds  
are blowing  
Over the sky.

One after another the white clouds  
are fleeting;

Every heart this May morning in joy-  
ance is beating

Full merrily;

Yet all things must die.

The stream will cease to flow;

The wind will cease to blow; 10

The clouds will cease to fleet;

The heart will cease to beat;

For all things must die.

All things must die.

Spring will come never more.

O, vanity!

Death waits at the door.

See! our friends are all forsaking

The wine and the merrymaking.

We are call'd — we must go. 20

Laid low, very low,

In the dark we must lie.

The merry glees are still;

The voice of the bird

Shall no more be heard,

Nor the wind on the hill.

O, misery!

Hark! death is calling

While I speak to ye,

The jaw is falling, 30

The red cheek paling,

The strong limbs failing;

Ice with the warm blood mixing;

The eyeballs fixing.

Nine times goes the passing bell:

Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth

Had a birth,

As all men know,

Long ago. 40

And the old earth must die.

So let the warm winds range,

And the blue wave beat the  
shore;

For even and morn

Ye will never see

Thro' eternity.

All things were born.

Ye will come never more,

For all things must die.

## LEONINE ELEGIACS

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming  
the broad valley dimm'd in the  
gloaming;  
Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines only  
the far river shines.

Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and  
bowers of rose-blowing bushes,  
Down by the poplar tall rivulets bab-  
ble and fall.  
Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly; the  
grasshopper carolleteth clearly;  
Deeply the wood-dove coos; shrilly  
the owl halloos;  
Winds creep; dews fall chilly: in  
her first sleep earth breathes  
stilly:  
Over the pools in the burn water-  
gnats murmur and mourn.  
Sadly the far kine loweth; the glim-  
mering water outfloweth;  
Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope  
to the dark hyaline.  
Low-throned Hesper is stayed be-  
tween the two peaks; but the  
Naiad  
Throbbing in mild unrest holds him  
beneath in her breast.  
The ancient poetess singeth that Hes-  
perus all things bringeth,  
Smoothing the wearied mind: bring  
me my love, Rosalind.  
Thou comest morning or even; she  
cometh not morning or even.  
False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is  
my sweet Rosalind?

# SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

## OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND

O God! my God! have mercy now.  
I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou  
Didst die for me, for such as *me*,  
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,  
And that my sin was as a thorn  
Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,  
Wounding Thy soul. — That even  
now,  
In this extremest misery  
Of ignorance, I should require  
A sign! and if a bolt of fire 10  
Would rive the slumbrous summer  
noon  
While I do pray to Thee alone,  
Think my belief would stronger grow!  
Is not my human pride brought low?  
The boastings of my spirit still?  
The joy I had in my free-will  
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like  
grown?

And what is left to me but Thou,  
And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;  
Christians with happy countenances—  
And children all seem full of Thee!  
And women smile with saint-like  
glances 22  
Like Thine own mother's when she  
bow'd  
Above Thee, on that happy morn  
When angels spake to men aloud,  
And Thou and peace to earth were  
born.  
Good-will to me as well as all—  
I one of them; my brothers they;  
Brothers in Christ—a world of peace  
And confidence, day after day; 30  
And trust and hope till things should  
cease,  
And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!  
To hold a common scorn of death!  
And at a burial to hear  
The creaking cords which wound and  
cat  
Into my human heart, when'er  
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not  
fear,  
With hopeful grief, were passing  
sweet!

Thrice happy state again to be 40  
The trustful infant on the knee,  
Who lets his rosy fingers play  
About his mother's neck, and knows  
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes!  
They comfort him by night and day;  
They light his little life away;  
He hath no thought of coming woes;  
He hath no care of life or death;  
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,  
Because the Spirit of happiness 50  
And perfect rest so inward is;  
And loveth so his innocent heart,  
Her temple and her place of birth,  
Where she would ever wish to dwell,  
Life of the fountain there, beneath  
Its salient springs, and far apart,  
Hating to wander out on earth,  
Or breathe into the hollow air,  
Whose chillness would make visible  
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,  
Which mixing with the infant's blood,  
Fulfills him with beatitude. 60  
O, sure it is a special care  
Of God, to fortify from doubt,

To arm in proof, and guard about  
With triple-mailed trust, and clear  
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were  
As thine, my mother, when with  
brows

Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld  
In thine, I listen'd to thy vows, <sup>71</sup>  
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—  
For me unworthy!—and beheld  
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that  
knew

The beauty and repose of faith,  
And the clear spirit shining thro'.  
O, wherefore do we grow awry  
From roots which strike so deep?  
why dare

Paths in the desert? Could not I  
Bow myself down, where thou hast  
knelt, <sup>80</sup>

To the earth—until the ice would  
melt

Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?  
What devil had the heart to scathe  
Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush  
the dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave  
Was deep, my mother, in the clay?  
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I  
So little love for thee? But why  
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why  
pray

To one who heeds not, who can save  
But will not? Great in faith, and  
strong <sup>91</sup>

Against the grief of circumstance  
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What  
if

Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive  
Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,  
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance  
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low  
Unto the death, not sunk! I know  
At matins and at evensong,  
That thou, if thou wert yet alive, <sup>100</sup>  
In deep and daily prayers wouldst  
strive

To reconcile me with thy God.  
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold  
At heart, thou wouldst murmur  
still—

'Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,  
My Lord, if so it be Thy will.'  
Wouldst tell me I must brook the rod  
And chastisement of human pride;

That pride, the sin of devils, stood,  
Betwixt me and the light of God; <sup>110</sup>  
That hitherto I had defied  
And had rejected God—that grace  
Would drop from His o'er-brimming  
love,

As manna on my wilderness,  
If I would pray—that God would  
move

And strike the hard, hard rock, and  
thence,

Sweet in their utmost bitterness,  
Would issue tears of penitence  
Which would keep green hope's life.  
Alas!

I think that pride hath now no place  
Nor sojourn in me. I am void, <sup>121</sup>  
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet  
Anchor thy frailty there, where man  
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea  
At midnight, when the crisp slope  
waves

After a tempest rib and fret  
The broad-imbed beach, why he  
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?  
Wherefore his ridges are not curls <sup>130</sup>  
And ripples of an inland mere?  
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can  
Draw down into his vexed pools  
All that blue heaven which hues and  
paves

The other? I am too forlorn,  
Too shaken: my own weakness fools  
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,  
Moved from beneath with doubt and  
fear.

'Yet,' said I, in my morn of youth,  
The unsunn'd freshness of my  
strength, <sup>140</sup>

When I went forth in quest of truth,  
'It is man's privilege to doubt,  
If so be that from doubt at length  
Truth may stand forth unmoved of  
change,

An image with profulgent brows  
And perfect limbs, as from the storm  
Of running fires and fluid range  
Of lawless airs, at last stood out  
This excellence and solid form  
Of constant beauty. For the ox <sup>150</sup>  
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills  
The horned valleys all about,  
And hollows of the fringed hills

In summer heats, with placid lows  
 Unfearing, till his own blood flows  
 About his hoof. And in the flocks  
 The lamb rejoiceth in the year,  
 And raceth freely with his fere,  
 And answers to his mother's calls 159  
 From the flower'd furrow. In a time  
 Of which he wots not, run short pains  
 Thro' his warm heart; and then, from  
 whence

He knows not, on his light there falls  
 A shadow; and his native slope,  
 Where he was wont to leap and climb,  
 Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,  
 And something in the darkness draws  
 His forehead earthward, and he dies.  
 Shall man live thus, in joy and hope  
 As a young lamb, who cannot dream,  
 Living, but that he shall live on? 171  
 Shall we not look into the laws  
 Of life and death, and things that  
 seem,

And things that be, and analyze  
 Our double nature, and compare  
 All creeds till we have found the one,  
 If one there be?' Ay me! I fear  
 All may not doubt, but everywhere  
 Some must clasp idols. Yet, my God,  
 Whom call I idol? Let Thy dove 180  
 Shadow me over, and my sins  
 Be unremember'd, and Thy love  
 Enlighten me. O, teach me yet  
 Somewhat before the heavy clod  
 Weighs on me, and the busy fret  
 Of that sharp-headed worm begins  
 In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!  
 O spirit and heart made desolate!  
 O damned vacillating state! 190

### THE KRAKEN

BELOW the thunders of the upper  
 deep,  
 Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
 His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded  
 sleep  
 The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sun-  
 lights flee  
 About his shadowy sides; above him  
 swell  
 Huge sponges of millennial growth  
 and height;  
 And far away into the sickly light,

From many a wondrous grot and se-  
 cret cell  
 Unnumber'd and enormous polypi  
 Winnow with giant arms the slumber-  
 ing green.  
 There hath he lain for ages, and will  
 lie  
 Battering upon huge sea-worms in  
 his sleep,  
 Until the latter fire shall heat the  
 deep;  
 Then once by man and angels to be  
 seen,  
 In roaring he shall rise and on the sur-  
 face die.

### SONG

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,  
 Leaning upon the ridged sea,  
 Breathed low around the rolling earth  
 With mellow preludes, 'We are  
 free.'

The streams, through many a liliated  
 row  
 Down-carolling to the crisped sea,  
 Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow  
 Atween the blossoms, 'We are  
 free.'

### LILIAN

#### I

ARRY, fairy Lilian,  
 Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
 When I ask her if she love me  
 Clasps her tiny hands above me,  
 Laughing all she can;  
 She'll not tell me if she love me,  
 Cruel little Lilian.

#### II

When my passion seeks  
 Pleasance in love-sighs,  
 She, looking thro' and thro' me  
 Thoroughly to undo me,  
 Smiling, never speaks:  
 So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,  
 From beneath her gathered wimple  
 Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
 Till the lightning laughter dimple  
 The baby-roses in her cheeks;  
 Then away she flies.



## III

Prythee weep, May Lilian !  
 Gaiety without eclipse  
 Wearieth me, May Lilian ;  
 Thro' my very heart it thrilleth  
 When from crimson-threaded lips  
 Silver-treble laughter trilleth :  
 Prythee weep, May Lilian !

## IV

Praying all I can,  
 If prayers will not hush thee,  
 Airy Lilian,  
 Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
 Fairy Lilian.

## ISABEL

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright,  
 but fed  
 With the clear-pointed flame of  
 chastity,  
 Clear, without heat, undying, tended  
 by  
 Pure vestal thoughts in the trans-  
 lucent fane  
 Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-dis-  
 pread,  
 Madonna-wise on either side her head ;  
 Sweet lips whereon perpetually  
 did reign  
 The summer calm of golden charity,  
 Were fixed shadows of thy fixed  
 mood,  
 Revered Isabel, the crown and  
 head,  
 The stately flower of female fortitude,  
 Of perfect wifehood and pure  
 lowlihead.

The intuitive decision of a bright  
 And thorough-edged intellect to part  
 Error from crime ; a prudence to  
 withhold ;  
 The laws of marriage character'd  
 in gold  
 Upon the blanch'd tablets of her  
 heart ;  
 A love still burning upward, giving  
 light  
 To read those laws ; an accent very low  
 In blandishment, but a most silver  
 flow  
 Of subtle-paced counsel in dis-  
 tress,

Right to the heart and brain, tho' un-  
 descried,  
 Winning its way with extreme  
 gentleness  
 Thro' all the outworks of suspicious  
 pride ;  
 A courage to endure and to obey ;  
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of  
 sway,  
 Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid  
 life,  
 The queen of marriage, a most per-  
 fect wife.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon ;  
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy  
 one,  
 Till in its onward current it absorbs  
 With swifter movement and in  
 purer light  
 The vexed eddies of its wayward  
 brother ;  
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
 Clothing the stem, which else had  
 fallen quite,  
 With cluster'd flower-bells and am-  
 brosial orbs  
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on  
 each other —  
 Shadow forth thee : — the world  
 hath not another  
 (Tho' all her fairest forms are types of  
 thee,  
 And thou of God in thy great charity)  
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

## MARIANA

\* Mariana in the moated grange.\*  
*Measure for Measure.*

With blackest moss the flower-plots  
 Were thickly crusted, one and all ;  
 The rusted nails fell from the knots  
 That held the pear to the gable-  
 wall.  
 The broken sheds look'd sad and  
 strange :  
 Unlifted was the clinking latch ;  
 Weeded and worn the ancient  
 thatch  
 Upon the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, ' My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'



' Her tears fell with the dews at even ;  
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried '

Her tears fell with the dews at even :

Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;  
She could not look on the sweet heaven,

Either at morn or eventide.  
After the flitting of the bats,  
When thickest dark did trance the sky,

She drew her casement-curtain by,  
And glanced athwart the glooming flats. <sup>20</sup>

She only said, 'The night is dreary,

He cometh not,' she said ;  
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead !'

Upon the middle of the night,  
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow ;

The cock sung out an hour ere light ;  
From the dark fen the oxen's low  
Came to her ; without hope of change,  
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn, <sup>30</sup>

Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn  
About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, 'The day is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said ;  
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead !'

About a stone-cast from the wall  
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,

And o'er it many, round and small,  
 The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.  
 Hard by a poplar shook away, <sup>41</sup>  
 All silver-green with gnarled bark:  
 For leagues no other tree did mark  
 The level waste, the rounding gray.  
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead!'

And ever when the moon was low,  
 And the shrill winds were up and  
 away, <sup>50</sup>  
 In the white curtain, to and fro,  
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
 But when the moon was very low,  
 And wild winds bound within their  
 cell,  
 The shadow of the poplar fell  
 Upon her bed, across her brow.  
 She only said, 'The night is  
 dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead!' <sup>60</sup>

All day within the dreamy house,  
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd;  
 The blue fly sung in the pane; the  
 mouse  
 Behind the mouldering wainscot  
 shriek'd,  
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.  
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
 Old voices called her from without.  
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said; <sup>70</sup>  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead!'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
 Which to the wooing wind aloof  
 The poplar made, did all confound  
 Her sense; but most she loathed the  
 hour

When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
 Athwart the chambers, and the day  
 Was sloping toward his western  
 bower. <sup>80</sup>

Then said she, 'I am very dreary,  
 He will not come,' she said;  
 She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 O God, that I were dead!'

## TO —

## I

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful  
 scorn,  
 Edged with sharp laughter, cuts  
 atwain  
 The knots that tangle human  
 creeds,  
 The wounding cords that bind and  
 strain  
 The heart until it bleeds,  
 Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
 Roof not a glance so keen as thine;  
 If aught of prophecy be mine,  
 Thou wilt not live in vain.

## II

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit;  
 Falsehood shall bare her plaitea-  
 brow;  
 Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not  
 now  
 With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.  
 Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant  
 swords  
 Can do away that ancient lie;  
 A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
 Shot thro' and thro' with cunning  
 words.

## III

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,  
 Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost  
 need,  
 Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
 Until she be an athlete bold,  
 And weary with a finger's touch  
 Those writhed limbs of lightning  
 speed;  
 Like that strange angel which of old,  
 Until the breaking of the light,  
 Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
 Past Yabbok brook the livelong  
 night,  
 And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
 In the dim tract of Penuel.

## MADELINE

## I

THOU art not steep'd in golden lan-  
 guors,  
 No tranced summer calm is thine,  
 Ever varying Madeline.

Thro' light and shadow thou dost  
range,  
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
Delicious spites and darling angers,  
And airy forms of fitting change.

## II

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
Revealings deep and clear are thine  
Of wealthy smiles; but who may know  
Whether smile or frown be fleetest?  
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
Who may know?  
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
Light-glooming over eyes divine,  
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are  
thine,

Ever varying Madeline.  
Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
From one another,  
Each to each is dearest brother;  
Hues of the silken sheeny wool  
Momentarily shot into each other.  
All the mystery is thine;  
Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore,  
Ever varying Madeline.

## III

A subtle, sudden flame,  
By veering passion fann'd,  
About thee breaks and dances:  
When I would kiss thy hand,  
The flush of anger'd shame  
O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown:  
But when I turn away,  
Thou, willing me to stay,  
Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest,  
But, looking fixedly the while,  
All my bounding heart entanglest  
In a golden-netted smile;  
Then in madness and in bliss,  
If my lips should dare to kiss  
Thy taper fingers amorously,  
Again thou blushest angrily;  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown.

## SONG—THE OWL

## I

WHEN cats run home and light is come,  
And dew is cold upon the ground,

And the far-off stream is dumb,  
And the whirring sail goes round,  
And the whirring sail goes round;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

## II

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
And rarely smells the new-mown  
hay,  
And the cock hath sung beneath the  
thatch  
Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

## SECOND SONG

## TO THE SAME

## I

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,  
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
Which upon the dark afloat,  
So took echo with delight,  
So took echo with delight,  
That her voice, untuneful grown,  
Wears all day a fainter tone.

## II

I would mock thy chaunt anew;  
But I cannot mimic it;  
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tu-  
whoo-o-o!

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE  
ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn  
blew free  
In the silken sail of infancy,  
The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
The forward-flowing tide of time;  
And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
High-walled gardens green and old;  
True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and  
clove

The citron-shadows in the blue;  
By garden porches on the brim,  
The costly doors flung open wide,  
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
And broider'd sofas on each side.

In sooth it was a goodly time, 20  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans  
guard

The outlet, did I turn away  
The boat-head down a broad canal  
From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moonlit sward  
Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unnown, which  
crept

Adown to where the water slept. 30  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,  
Until another night in night  
I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they  
clomb 40

Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the  
dome

Of hollow boughs. A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rillels musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low 49  
Down from the central fountain's flow  
Fallen silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vari-colored shells  
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side

All round about the fragrant marge  
From fluted vase, and brazen urn 60  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson  
bells

Half-closed, and others studded wide  
With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odor in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung; 70  
Not he, but something which pos-  
sess'd

The darkness of the world, delight,  
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepres'd,  
Apart from place, withholding time,  
But flattering the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
Slumber'd; the solemn palms were  
ranged

Above, unwoo'd of summer wind; 80  
A sudden splendor from behind  
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-  
green,

And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid, 90  
Grew darker from that under-flame;  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
Entranced with that place and time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn —  
A realm of pleasance, many a  
mound, 101  
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing  
round



‘For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid’

The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
Graven with emblems of the time,  
In honor of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid. 110

With dazed vision unawares  
From the long alley’s latticed shade  
Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
After the fashion of the time  
And humor of the golden prime 120  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
As with the quintessence of flame,  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers look’d to shame  
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream’d  
Upon the mooned domes aloof  
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem’d  
Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
Of night new-risen, that marvellous  
time 130  
To celebrate the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl

Tressed with redolent ebony,  
 In many a dark delicious curl,  
 Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;  
 The sweetest lady of the time, <sup>141</sup>  
 Well worthy of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
 Pure silyer, underpropt a rich  
 Throne of the massive ore, from which  
 Down-droop'd, in many a floating  
 fold,  
 Engarlanded and diaper'd  
 With inwrought flowers, a cloth of  
 gold.  
 Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd  
 With merriment of kingly pride, <sup>151</sup>  
 Sole star of all that place and time,  
 I saw him — in his golden prime,  
 THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

### ODE TO MEMORY

ADDRESSED TO —

#### I

THOU who stealest fire,  
 From the fountains of the past,  
 To glorify the present, O, haste,  
 Visit my low desire!  
 Strengthen me, enlighten me!  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

#### II

Come not as thou camest of late,  
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
 On the white day, but robed in soften'd  
 light <sup>10</sup>  
 Of orient state.  
 Whilome thou camest with the morn-  
 ing mist,  
 Even as a maid, whose stately  
 brow  
 The dew-impearled winds of dawn  
 have kiss'd,  
 When she, as thou,  
 Stays on her floating locks the lovely  
 freight  
 Of overflowing blooms, and earliest  
 shoots  
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge of  
 fruits,  
 Which in wintertide shall star  
 The black earth with brilliance rare. <sup>20</sup>

#### III

Whilome thou camest with the morning  
 mist,  
 And with the evening cloud,  
 Showering thy gleaned wealth into  
 my open breast;  
 Those peerless flowers which in the  
 rudest wind  
 Never grow sere,  
 When rooted in the garden of the mind,  
 Because they are the earliest of the  
 year.  
 Nor was the night thy shroud.  
 In sweet dreams softer than unbroken  
 rest  
 Thou leddest by the hand thine infant  
 Hope. <sup>30</sup>  
 The eddying of her garments caught  
 from thee  
 The light of thy great presence; and  
 the cope  
 Of the half-attain'd futurity,  
 Tho' deep not fathomless,  
 Was cloven with the million stars  
 which tremble  
 O'er the deep mind of dauntless in-  
 fancy.  
 Small thought was there of life's dis-  
 tress;  
 For sure she deem'd no mist of earth  
 could dull  
 Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and  
 beautiful;  
 Sure she was nigher to heaven's  
 spheres, <sup>40</sup>  
 Listening the lordly music flowing  
 from  
 The illimitable years.  
 O, strengthen me, enlighten me!  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

#### IV

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,  
 Thou of the many tongues, the myriad  
 eyes!  
 Thou comest not with shows of flaunt-  
 ing vines  
 Unto mine inner eye,  
 Divinest Memory! <sup>50</sup>  
 Thou wert not nursed by the water-  
 fall  
 Which ever sounds and shines  
 A pillar of white light upon the  
 wall  
 Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:

Come from the woods that belt the  
gray hillside,  
The seven elms, the poplars four  
That stand beside my father's door,  
And chiefly from the brook that  
loves

When the first matin-song hath wak-  
en'd loud  
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
What time the amber morn <sup>70</sup>  
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung  
cloud.



'To . . . dimple in the dark of rushy coves'

To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed  
sand, <sup>59</sup>  
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,  
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,  
In every elbow and turn,  
The filter'd tribute of the rough wood-  
land;  
O, hither lead thy feet!  
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat  
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled  
folds,  
Upon the ridged wolds,

v

Large dowries doth the raptured eye  
To the young spirit present  
When first she is wed,  
And like a bride of old  
In triumph led,  
With music and sweet showers  
Of festal flowers,  
Unto the dwelling she must sway.  
Well hast thou done, great artist Mem-  
ory, 80



In setting round thy first experiment  
 With royal framework of wrought gold;  
 Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,  
 And foremost in thy various gallery  
 Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls  
 Upon the storied walls;  
 For the discovery  
 And newness of thine art so pleased thee  
 That all which thou hast drawn of fairest  
 Or boldest since but lightly weighs 90  
 With thee unto the love thou bearest  
 The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,  
 Ever retiring thou dost gaze  
 On the prime labor of thine early days,  
 No matter what the sketch might be :  
 Whether the high field on the bushless pike,  
 Or even a sand-built ridge  
 Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
 Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
 Or even a lowly cottage whence we see 100  
 Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,  
 Where from the frequent bridge,  
 Like emblems of infinity,  
 The trenched waters run from sky to sky;  
 Or a garden bower'd close  
 With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,  
 Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,  
 Or opening upon level plots  
 Of crowned lilies, standing near  
 Purple-spiked lavender: 110  
 Whither in after life retired  
 From brawling storms,  
 From weary wind,  
 With youthful fancy re-inspired,  
 We may hold converse with all forms  
 Of the many-sided mind,  
 And those whom passion hath not blinded,  
 Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone  
 Were how much better than to own 120  
 A crown, a sceptre, and a throne !

O, strengthen me, enlighten me !  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## SONG

## I

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours  
 Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers.

To himself he talks ;  
 For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
 At his work you may hear him sob  
 and sigh

In the walks ;  
 Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks  
 Of the mouldering flowers.

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
 Over its grave i' the earth so  
 chilly ;

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,  
 As a sick man's room when he taketh  
 repose

An hour before death ;  
 My very heart faints and my whole  
 soul grieves

At the moist rich smell of the rotting  
 leaves,

And the breath  
 Of the fading edges of box beneath,  
 And the year's last rose.

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
 Over its grave i' the earth so  
 chilly ;

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## A CHARACTER

With a half-glance upon the sky  
 At night he said, 'The wanderings  
 Of this most intricate Universe  
 Teach me the nothingness of things ;  
 Yet could not all creation pierce  
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty ; that the dull  
 Saw no divinity in grass,  
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;

Then looking as 't were in a glass,  
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his  
hair,  
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue: not the gods  
More purely when they wish to charm  
Pallas and Juno sitting by;  
And with a sweeping of the arm,  
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour  
He canvass'd human mysteries,  
And trod on silk, as if the winds  
Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
And stood aloof from other minds  
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
Himself unto himself he sold:  
Upon himself himself did feed;  
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
And other than his form of creed,  
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

### THE POET

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
With golden stars above;  
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the  
scorn of scorn,  
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good  
and ill,  
He saw thro' his own soul.  
The marvel of the everlasting will,  
An open scroll,

Before him lay; with echoing feet he  
threaded  
The secretest walks of fame:  
The viewless arrows of his thoughts  
were headed  
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his sil-  
ver tongue,  
And of so fierce a flight,  
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which  
bore  
Them earthward till they lit;

Then, like the arrow-seeds of the  
field flower,  
The fruitful wit

Cleaving took root, and springing  
forth anew  
Where'er they fell, behold,  
Like to the mother plant in semblance,  
grew  
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to  
fling  
The winged shafts of truth,  
To throng with stately blooms the  
breathing spring  
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs  
with beams,  
Tho' one did fling the fire;  
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many  
drams  
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth,  
the world  
Like one great garden show'd,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark  
upcurl'd,  
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august  
sunrise  
Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burn-  
ing eyes  
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden  
robes  
Sunn'd by those orient skies;  
But round about the circles of the  
globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced  
in flame  
WISDOM, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power—a sacred  
name.  
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they  
ran,  
And as the lightning to the thunder

Which follows it, riving the spirit of  
man,  
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words.  
No sword  
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with  
*his* word  
She shook the world.

### THE POET'S MIND

#### I

VEX not thou the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit ;  
Vex not thou the poet's mind,  
For thou canst not fathom it.  
Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river,  
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

#### II

Dark-brow'd sophists, come not  
anear ;  
All the place is holy ground ;  
Hollow smile and frozen sneer  
Come not here.  
Holy water will I pour  
In every spicy flower  
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it  
around.  
The flowers would faint at your cruel  
cheer.  
In your eye there is death,  
There is frost in your breath  
Which would blight the plants.  
Where you stand you cannot hear  
From the groves within  
The wild-bird's din.  
In the heart of the garden the merry  
bird chants.  
It would fall to the ground if you came  
in.  
In the middle leaps a fountain  
Like sheet lightning,  
Ever brightening  
With a low melodious thunder ;  
All day and all night it is ever drawn  
From the brain of the purple moun-  
tain  
Which stands in the distance yonder.  
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,  
And the mountain draws it from hea-  
ven above,

And it sings a song of undying love ;  
And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and  
full,  
You never would hear it, your ears are  
so dull ;  
So keep where you are ; you are foul  
with sin ;  
It would shrink to the earth if you  
came in.

### THE SEA-FAIRIES

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and  
saw,  
Betwixt the green brink and the run-  
ning foam,  
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms  
prest  
To little harps of gold ; and while they  
mused,  
Whispering to each other half in fear,  
Shrill music reach'd them on the mid-  
dle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither  
away ? fly no more.  
Whither away from the high green  
field, and the happy blossoming  
shore ?  
Day and night to the billow the foun-  
tain calls ;  
Down shower the gambolling water-  
falls  
From wandering over the lea ;  
Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
They freshen the silvery-crimson  
shells,  
And thick with white bells the clover-  
hill swells  
High over the full-toned sea.  
O, hither, come hither and furl your  
sails,  
Come hither to me and to me ;  
Hither, come hither and frolic and  
play ;  
Here it is only the mew that wails ;  
We will sing to you all the day.  
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
For here are the blissful downs and  
dales,  
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,  
And the spangle dances in bight and  
bay,  
And the rainbow forms and flies on  
the land  
Over the islands free ;

And the rainbow lives in the curve of  
the sand;  
Hither, come hither and see;  
And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning  
wave,  
And sweet is the color of cove and  
cave, 30  
And sweet shall your welcome be.  
O, hither, come hither, and be our  
lords,  
For merry brides are we.  
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak  
sweet words;  
O, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
With pleasure and love and jubilee.  
O, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
When the sharp clear twang of the  
golden chords  
Runs up the ridged sea.  
Who can light on as happy a shore 40  
All the world o'er, all the world  
o'er?  
Whither away? listen and stay; mari-  
ner, mariner, fly no more.

## THE DESERTED HOUSE

## I

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
Side by side,  
Leaving door and windows wide;  
Careless tenants they!

## II

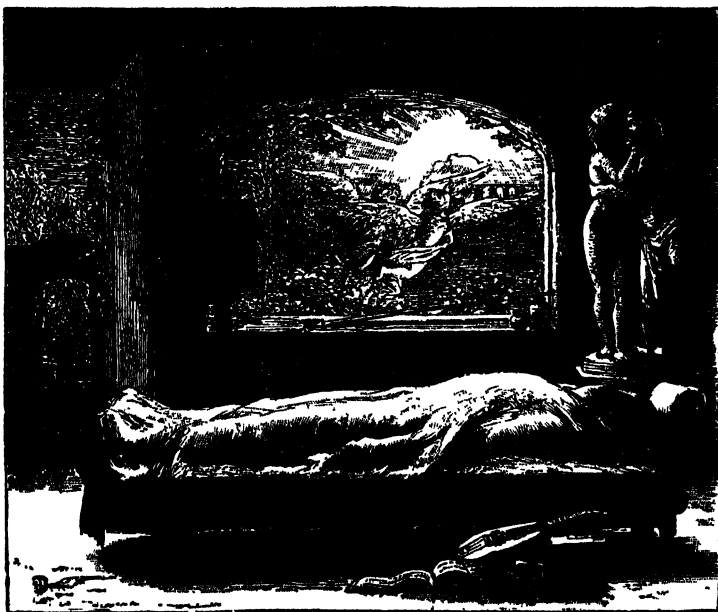
All within is dark as night:  
In the windows is no light;  
And no murmur at the door,  
So frequent on its hinge before.

## III

Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or thro' the windows we shall  
see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house.

## IV

Come away; no more of mirth  
Is here or merry-making sound.



'Life and Thought have gone away  
Side by side'

The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground.

## V

Come away; for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell,  
But in a city glorious —  
A great and distant city — have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have stayed with  
us!

## THE DYING SWAN

## I

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
And loudly did lament.  
It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
And took the reed-tops as it went.

## II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky  
Shone out their crowning snows.  
One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did  
sigh;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,  
Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
And far thro' the marish green and  
still  
The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and  
yellow.

## III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the  
soul  
Of that waste place with joy  
Hidden in sorrow. At first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and  
clear;  
And floating about the under-sky,  
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach  
stole  
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;  
But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
With a music strange and manifold,  
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold;

As when a mighty people rejoice<sup>31</sup>  
With shawms, and with cymbals, and  
harps of gold,  
And the tumult of their acclaim is  
roll'd  
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
To the shepherd who watcheth the  
evening star.  
And the creeping mosses and clamber-  
ing weeds,  
And the willow-branches hoar and  
dank,  
And the wavy swell of the souging  
reeds,  
And the wave-worn horns of the echo-  
ing bank,  
And the silvery marish-flowers that  
throng<sup>40</sup>  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song.

## A DIRGE

## I

Now is done thy long day's work;  
Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.  
Let them rave.  
Shadows of the silver birk  
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;  
Nothing but the small cold worm  
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.  
Let them rave.  
Light and shadow ever wander  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;  
Chaunteth not the brooding bee  
Sweeter tones than calumny?  
Let them rave.  
Thou wilt never raise thine head  
From the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;  
The woodbine and eglare  
Drip sweeter dew than traitor's tear.  
Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## V

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,  
Bramble roses, faint and pale,  
And long purples of the dale.  
Let them rave.  
These in every shower creep  
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine,  
The frail bluebell peereth over  
Rare broidery of the purple clover.  
Let them rave.  
Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## VII

Wild words wander here and there ;  
God's great gift of speech abused  
Makes thy memory confused ;  
But let them rave.  
The balm-cricket carols clear  
In the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## LOVE AND DEATH

WHAT time the mighty moon was  
gathering light  
Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,  
And all about him roll'd his lustrous  
eyes ;  
When, turning round a cassia, full in  
view,  
Death, walking all alone beneath a  
yew,  
And talking to himself, first met his  
sight.  
'You must begone,' said Death, 'these  
walks are mine.'  
Love wept and spread his sheeny vans  
for flight ;  
Yet ere he parted said, 'This hour is  
thine ;  
Thou art the shadow of life, and as  
the tree  
Stands in the sun and shadows all  
beneath,

So in the light of great eternity  
Life eminent creates the shade of death.  
The shadow passeth when the tree  
shall fall,  
But I shall reign for ever over all.'

## THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

My heart is wasted with my woe,  
Oriana.  
There is no rest for me below,  
Oriana.  
When the long dun wolds are ribb'd  
with snow,  
And loud the Norland whirlwinds  
blow,  
Oriana,  
Alone I wander to and fro,  
Oriana.  
Ere the light on dark was growing, 10  
Oriana,  
At midnight the cock was crowing,  
Oriana ;  
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
We heard the steeds to battle going,  
Oriana,  
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
Oriana.  
In the yew-wood black as night,  
Oriana, 20  
Ere I rode into the fight,  
Oriana,  
While blissful tears blinded my sight  
By star-shine and by moonlight,  
Oriana,  
I to thee my troth did plight,  
Oriana.  
She stood upon the castle wall,  
Oriana ;  
She watch'd my crest among them all,  
Oriana ;  
She saw me fight, she heard me call, 31  
When forth there stept a foeman  
tall,  
Oriana,  
Atween me and the castle wall,  
Oriana.  
The bitter arrow went aside,  
Oriana ;  
The false, false arrow went aside,  
Oriana ; 40



'I to thee my troth did plight,  
Oriana'

The damned arrow glanced aside,  
And pierced thy heart, my love, my  
bride,

Oriana!

Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
Oriana!

O, narrow, narrow was the space,

Oriana!

Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
Oriana.

O, deathful stabs were dealt apace, 50  
The battle deepen'd in its place,  
Oriana;

But I was down upon my face,  
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I  
lay,  
Oriana!

How could I rise and come away,

Oriana?

How could I look upon the day?

They should have stabb'd me where I  
lay, 60

Oriana —

They should have trod me into clay,  
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,  
Oriana!

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
Oriana!

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,  
And then the tears run down my  
cheek,

Oriana.

What watest thou? whom dost thou  
seek, 70  
Oriana?

I cry aloud ; none hear my cries,  
     Oriana.  
 Thou comest between me and the  
     skies,  
     Oriana.  
 I feel the tears of blood arise  
 Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
     Oriana.  
 Within thy heart my arrow lies, 80  
     Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow  
     Oriana !  
 O happy thou that liest low,  
     Oriana !  
 All night the silence seems to flow  
 Beside me in my utter woe,  
     Oriana.  
 A weary, weary way I go,  
     Oriana ! 90

When Norland winds pipe down the  
     sea,  
     Oriana,  
 I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
     Oriana.  
 Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
 I dare not die and come to thee,  
     Oriana.  
 I hear the roaring of the sea,  
     Oriana.

## CIRCUMSTANCE

Two children in two neighbor villages  
 Playing mad pranks along the heathy  
     leas ;  
 Two strangers meeting at a festival ;  
 Two lovers whispering by an orchard  
     wall ;  
 Two hives bound fast in one with  
     golden ease ;  
 Two graves grass-green beside a gray  
     church-tower,  
 Wash'd with still rains and daisy-blos-  
     somed ;  
 Two children in one hamlet born and  
     bred :  
 So runs the round of life from hour  
     to hour.

## THE MERMAN

## I

Who would be  
 A merman bold,

Sitting alone,  
 Singing alone  
 Under the sea,  
 With a crown of gold,  
 On a throne ?

## II

I would be a merman bold,  
 I would sit and sing the whole of the  
     day ;  
 I would fill the sea-halls with a voice  
     of power ;  
 But at night I would roam abroad  
     and play  
 With the mermaids in and out of the  
     rocks,  
 Dressing their hair with the white  
     sea-flower ;  
 And holding them back by their flow-  
     ing locks  
 I would kiss them often under the sea,  
 And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
     Laughingly, laughingly ;  
 And then we would wander away,  
     away,  
 To the pale-green sea-groves straight  
     and high,  
 Chasing each other merrily.

## III

There would be neither moon nor star,  
 But the wave would make music  
     above us afar —  
 Low thunder and light in the magic  
     night —  
 Neither moon nor star.  
 We would call aloud in the dreamy  
     dells,  
 Call to each other and whoop and cry  
     All night, merrily, merrily.  
 They would pelt me with starry span-  
     gles and shells,  
 Laughing and clapping their hands  
     between,  
 All night, merrily, merrily,  
 But I would throw to them back in  
     mine  
 Turkis and agate and almondine ;  
 Then leaping out upon them unseen  
 I would kiss them often under the sea,  
 And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
     Laughingly, laughingly.  
 O, what a happy life were mine  
 Under the hollow-hung ocean green !  
 Soft are the moss-beds under the sea :  
 We would live merrily, merrily.



## THE MERMAID

## I

Who would be  
A mermaid fair,  
Singing alone,  
Combing her hair  
Under the sea,  
In a golden curl  
With a comb of pearl,  
On a throne?

## II

I would be a mermaid fair;  
I would sing to myself the whole of  
the day;  
With a comb of pearl I would comb  
my hair;  
And still as I comb'd I would sing and  
say,  
'Who is it loves me? who loves not  
me?'  
I would comb my hair till my ringlets  
would fall  
Low adown, low adown,  
From under my starry sea-bud crown  
Low adown and around,  
And I should look like a fountain of  
gold  
Springing alone  
With a shrill inner sound,  
Over the throne  
In the midst of the hall;  
Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
From his coiled sleeps in the central  
deep  
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
Round the hall where I sate, and look  
in at the gate  
With his large calm eyes for the love  
of me.  
And all the mermen under the sea  
Would feel their immortality  
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

## III

But at night I would wander away,  
away,  
I would fling on each side my low-  
flowing locks,  
And lightly vault from the throne and  
play  
With the mermen in and out of the  
rocks;  
We would run to and fro, and hide  
and seek,

On the broad seawolds in the crim-  
son shells,  
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the  
sea.  
But if any came near I would call,  
and shriek,  
And adown the steep like a wave I  
would leap  
From the diamond-ledges that jut  
from the dells;  
For I would not be kiss'd by all who  
would list  
Of the bold merry mermen under the  
sea.  
They would sue me, and woo me, and  
flatter me,  
In the purple twilights under the sea;  
But the king of them all would carry  
me,  
Woo me, and win me, and marry  
me,  
In the branching jaspers under the  
sea.  
Then all the dry pied things that be  
In the hueless mosses under the sea  
Would curl round my silver feet si-  
lently,  
All looking up for the love of me.  
And if I should carol aloud, from  
aloft  
All things that are forked, and horned,  
and soft  
Would lean out from the hollow sphere  
of the sea,  
All looking down for the love of me.

## ADELINE

## I

Mystery of mysteries,  
Faintly smiling Adeline,  
Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
But beyond expression fair  
With thy floating flaxen hair;  
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
Take the heart from out my breast.  
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## II

Whence that aery bloom of thine,  
Like a lily which the sun  
Looks thro' in his sad decline.  
And a rose-bush leans upon,

Thou that faintly smilest still,  
 As a Nalad in a well,  
 Looking at the set of day,  
 Or a phantom two hours old  
 Of a maiden past away,  
 Ere the placid lips be cold ?  
 Wherefore those faint smiles of  
 thine,  
 Spiritual Adeline ?

## III

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?  
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?  
 For sure thou art not all alone.  
 Do beating hearts of salient  
 springs  
 Keep measure with thine own ?  
 Hast thou heard the butterflies  
 What they say betwixt their  
 wings ?  
 Or in stillest evenings  
 With what voice the violet woos  
 To his heart the silver dews ?  
 Or when little airs arise,

How the merry bluebell rings  
 To the mosses underneath ?  
 Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
 Of the lilies at sunrise ?  
 Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

## IV

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
 Some spirit of a crimson rose  
 In love with thee forgets to close  
 His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
 All night long on darkness blind.  
 What aileth thee ? whom waitest thou  
 With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,  
 And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
 Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

## V

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
 When thou gazest at the skies ?  
 Doth the low-tongued Orient  
 Wander from the side of the morn,  
 Dripping with Sabæan spice



• The low-tongued Orient •

On thy pillow, lowly bent  
 With melodious airs lovelorn,  
 Breathing Light against thy face,  
 While his locks a-drooping twined  
 Round thy neck in subtle ring  
 Make a carcanet of rays,  
 And ye talk together still,  
 In the language wherewith Spring  
 Letters cowslips on the hill?  
 Hence that look and smile of thine,  
 Spiritual Adeline.

## MARGARET

## I

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
 Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
 Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
 Of pensive thought and aspect  
 pale,  
 Your melancholy sweet and frail  
 As perfume of the cuckoo flower?  
 From the westward-winding flood,  
 From the evening-lighted wood,  
 From all things outward you have  
 won  
 A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
 Between the rainbow and the  
 sun.  
 The very smile before you speak,  
 That dimples your transparent cheek,  
 Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
 The senses with a still delight  
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
 Like the tender amber round  
 Which the moon about her spread-  
 eth,  
 Moving thro' a fleecy night.

## II

You love, remaining peacefully,  
 To hear the murmur of the strife,  
 But enter not the toil of life.  
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.  
 You are the evening star, alway  
 Remaining betwixt dark and  
 bright;  
 'Tull'd echoes of laborious day  
 Come to you, gleams of mellow  
 light  
 Float by you on the verge of  
 night.

## III

What can it matter, Margaret,  
 What songs below the waning  
 stars  
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
 Sang, looking thro' his prison  
 bars?  
 Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
 The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
 Just ere the falling axe did part  
 The burning brain from the true  
 heart,  
 Even in her sight he loved so well?

## IV

A fairy shield your Genius made  
 And gave you on your natal day.  
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
 Keeps real sorrow far away.  
 You move not in such solitudes,  
 You are not less divine,  
 But more human in your moods,  
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
 Touch'd with a somewhat darker  
 hue,  
 And less aerially blue,  
 But ever trembling thro' the dew  
 Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

## V

O sweet pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 Come down, come down, and hear me  
 speak.  
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek.  
 The sun is just about to set,  
 The arching limes are tall and shady,  
 And faint, rainy lights are seen,  
 Moving in the leavy beech.  
 Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
 Where all day long you sit be-  
 tween  
 Joy and woe, and whisper each.  
 Or only look across the lawn,  
 Look out below your bower-eaves,  
 Look down, and let your blue eyes  
 dawn  
 Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

## ROSALIND

## I

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,

Whose free delight, from any height  
 of rapid flight,  
 Stoops at all game that wing the skies,  
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon,  
 whither,  
 Careless both of wind and weather,  
 Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,  
 Up or down the streaming wind?

## II

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd  
 strains,  
 The shadow rushing up the sea,  
 The lightning flash atween the rains,  
 The sunlight driving down the lea,  
 The leaping stream, the very wind,  
 That will not stay, upon his way,  
 To stoop the cowslip to the plains,  
 Is not so clear and bold and free  
 As you, my falcon Rosalind.  
 You care not for another's pains,  
 Because you are the soul of joy,  
 Bright metal all without alloy.  
 Life shoots and glances thro' your  
 veins,  
 And flashes off a thousand ways,  
 Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.  
 Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,  
 Keen with triumph, watching still  
 To pierce me thro' with pointed light;  
 But oftentimes they flash and glitter  
 Like sunshine on a dancing rill,  
 And your words are seeming-bitter,  
 Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter  
 From excess of swift delight.

## III

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,  
 My gay young hawk, my Rosalind.  
 Too long you keep the upper skies;  
 Too long you roam and wheel at  
 will;  
 But we must hood your random eyes,  
 That care not whom they kill,  
 And your cheek, whose brilliant hue  
 Is so sparkling-fresh to view,  
 Some red heath-flower in the dew,  
 Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind  
 And keep you fast, my Rosalind,  
 Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,  
 And clip your wings, and make you  
 love.  
 When we have lured you from above,  
 And that delight of frolic flight, by  
 day or night,

From North to South,  
 We'll bind you fast in silken cords,  
 And kiss away the bitter words  
 From off your rosy mouth.

## ELEÄNORE

## I

Thy dark eyes open'd not,  
 Nor first reveal'd themselves to Eng-  
 lish air,  
 For there is nothing here  
 Which, from the outward to the in-  
 ward brought,  
 Moulded thy baby thought.  
 Far off from human neighborhood  
 Thou wert born, on a summer  
 morn,  
 A mile beneath the cedar-wood.  
 Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd  
 With breezes from our oaken  
 glades,<sup>10</sup>  
 But thou wert nursed in some delicious  
 land  
 Of lavish lights, and floating  
 shades;  
 And flattering thy childish thought  
 The oriental fairy brought,  
 At the moment of thy birth,  
 From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
 And the hearts of purple hills,  
 And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,  
 The choicest wealth of all the  
 earth,  
 Jewel or shell, or starry ore,<sup>20</sup>  
 To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

## II

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
 Thro' half-open lattices  
 Coming in the scented breeze,  
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
 With whitest honey in fairy gar-  
 dens cull'd —  
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,  
 With the hum of swarming bees  
 Into dreamful slumber lull'd.<sup>30</sup>

## III

Who may minister to thee?  
 Summer herself should minister  
 To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
 On golden salvers, or it may be,  
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower

Grape-thicken'd from the light, and  
 blinded  
 With many a deep-hued bell-like  
 flower  
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
 Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
 And the crag that fronts the even, 40  
 All along the shadowing shore,  
 Crimsoned over an inland mere.  
 Eleānore!

## IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,  
 How may measured words adore  
 The full-flowing harmony  
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
 Eleānore?  
 The luxuriant symmetry  
 Of thy floating gracefulness, 50  
 Eleānore?  
 Every turn and glance of thine,  
 Every lineament divine,  
 Eleānore,

And the steady sunset glow  
 That stays upon thee? For in thee  
 Is nothing sudden, nothing single;  
 Like two streams of incense free  
 From one censer in one shrine,  
 Thought and motion mingle, 60  
 Mingle ever. Motions flow  
 To one another, even as tho'  
 They were modulated so  
 To an unheard melody,  
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep  
 Of richest pauses, evermore  
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep;  
 Who may express thee, Eleānore?

## V

I stand before thee, Eleānore;  
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
 Daily and hourly, more and more. 71  
 I muse, as in a trance, the while  
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.  
 I muse, as in a trance, when'er  
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
 Float on to me. I would I were  
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,  
 To stand apart, and to adore,  
 Gazing on thee for evermore, 80  
 Serene, imperial Eleānore!

## VI

Sometimes, with most intensity  
 Gazing, I seem to see

Thought folded over thought, smiling  
 asleep,  
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and  
 deep  
 In thy large eyes that, overpower'd  
 quite,  
 I cannot veil or droop my sight,  
 But am as nothing in its light.  
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,  
 Even while we gaze on it, 90  
 Should slowly round his orb, and  
 slowly grow  
 To a full face, there like a sun remain  
 Fix'd — then as slowly fade again,  
 And draw itself to what it was  
 before;  
 So full, so deep, so slow,  
 Thought seems to come and go  
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleā-  
 nore.

## VII

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,  
 Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,  
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,  
 Grow golden all about the sky; 101  
 In thee all passion becomes passionless,  
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
 Losing his fire and active might  
 In a silent meditation,  
 Falling into a still delight,  
 And luxury of contemplation.  
 As waves that up a quiet cove  
 Rolling slide, and lying still  
 Shadow forth the banks at will, 110  
 Or sometimes they swell and move,  
 Pressing up against the land  
 With motions of the outer sea;  
 And the self-same influence  
 Controlleth all the soul and sense  
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid  
 Love,  
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
 Droops both his wings, regarding  
 thee,  
 And so would languish evermore, 120  
 Serene, imperial Eleānore.

## VIII

But when I see thee roam, with tresses  
 unconfined,  
 While the amorous odorous wind  
 Breathes low between the sunset and  
 the moon;  
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,

On silken cushions half reclined;  
 I watch thy grace, and in its  
 place  
 My heart a charmed slumber keeps,  
 While I muse upon thy face;  
 And a languid fire creeps <sup>130</sup>  
 Thro' my veins to all my frame,  
 Dissolvingly and slowly. Soon  
 From thy rose-red lips my name  
 Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,  
 With dinning sound my ears are rife,  
 My tremulous tongue faltereth,  
 I lose my color, I lose my breath,  
 I drink the cup of a costly death,  
 Brimm'd with delicious draughts of  
 warmest life.  
 I die with my delight before <sup>140</sup>  
 I hear what I would hear from  
 thee;  
 Yet tell my name again to me,  
 I *would* be dying evermore,  
 So dying ever, Eleñnore.

## KATE

I know her by her angry air,  
 Her bright black eyes, her bright  
 black hair,  
 Her rapid laughter wild and shrill,  
 As laughter of the woodpecker  
 From the bosom of a hill.  
 'Tis Kate — she sayeth what she  
 will;  
 For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,  
 Clear as the twanging of a harp.  
 Her heart is like a throbbing star.  
 Kate hath a spirit ever strung  
 Like a new bow, and bright and  
 sharp  
 As edges of the scimitar.  
 Whence shall she take a fitting mate?  
 For Kate no common love will feel;  
 My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,  
 As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith 'the world is void of might.'  
 Kate saith 'the men are gilded flies.'  
 Kate snaps her fingers at my vows;  
 Kate will not hear of lovers' sighs.  
 I would I were an armed knight,  
 Far-famed for well-won enterprise,  
 And wearing on my swarthy brows  
 The garland of new-wreathed em-  
 prise;  
 For in a moment I would pierce

The blackest files of clanging fight,  
 And strongly strike to left and right,  
 In dreaming of my lady's eyes.  
 O, Kate loves well the bold and  
 fierce;  
 But none are bold enough for Kate,  
 She cannot find a fitting mate.

'MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY  
DAYS'

My life is full of weary days,  
 But good things have not kept aloof,  
 Nor wander'd into other ways;  
 I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,  
 Nor golden largess of thy praise.  
 And now shake hands across the brink  
 Of that deep grave to which I go,  
 Shake hands once more; I cannot sink  
 So far — far down, but I shall know  
 Thy voice, and answer from below.

When in the darkness over me  
 The four-handed mole shall scrape,  
 Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,  
 Nor wreath thy cap with doleful  
 crape,  
 But pledge me in the flowing grape.  
 And when the sappy field and wood  
 Grow green beneath the showery  
 gray,  
 And rugged barks begin to bud,  
 And thro' damp holts new-flush'd  
 with may,  
 Ring sudden scritchings of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,  
 And on my clay her darnel grow;  
 Come only, when the days are still,  
 And at my headstone whisper low,  
 And tell me if the woodbines blow.

## EARLY SONNETS

I

TO —

As when with downcast eyes we muse  
 and brood,  
 And ebb into a former life, or seem  
 To lapse far back in some confused  
 dream  
 To states of mystical similitude,

If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,  
 Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,  
 So that we say, 'All this hath been before,  
 All this hath been, I know not when or where;'  
 So, friend, when first I look'd upon your face,  
 Our thought gave answer each to each, so true—  
 Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—  
 That, tho' I knew not in what time or place,  
 Methought that I had often met with you,  
 And either lived in either's heart and speech.

## II

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee — thou wilt be  
 A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
 To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;  
 Our dusted velvets have much need of thee:  
 Thou art no Sabbath-drawler of old saws,  
 Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily;  
 But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy  
 To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
 With iron-worded proof, hating to hark  
 The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
 Half God's good Sabbath, while the worn-out clerk  
 Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne  
 Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark  
 Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

## III

Mine be the strength of spirit, full and free,  
 Like some broad river rushing down alone,

With the selfsame impulse wherewith he was thrown  
 From his loud fount upon the echoing lea;—  
 Which with increasing might doth forward flee  
 By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and isle,  
 And in the middle of the green salt sea  
 Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.  
 Mine be the power which ever to its sway  
 Will win the wise at once, and by degrees  
 May into uncongenial spirits flow;  
 Even as the warm gulf-stream of Florida  
 Floats far away into the Northern seas  
 The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

## IV

ALEXANDER

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right arm debased  
 The throne of Persia, when her Satrap bled  
 At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled  
 Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits, disgraced  
 For ever—thee (thy pathway sand-erased)  
 Gliding with equal crowns two serpents led  
 Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-fed  
 Ammonian Oasis in the waste.  
 There in a silent shade of laurel brown  
 Apart the Chamian Oracle divine  
 Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries:  
 High things were spoken there, unhand-ed down;  
 Only they saw thee from the secret shrine  
 Returning with hot cheek and kindled eyes.

## V

BUONAPARTE

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,  
 Madman! — to chain with chains, and bind with bands

That island queen who sways the  
floods and lands  
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight  
woke,  
When from her wooden walls, — lit by  
sure hands, —  
With thunders, and with lightnings,  
and with smoke, —  
Peal after peal, the British battle  
broke,  
Lulling the brine against the Coptic  
sands.  
We taught him lowlier moods, when  
Elsinore  
Heard the war moan along the distant  
sea,  
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with  
sudden fires  
Flamed over; at Trafalgar yet once  
more  
We taught him; late he learned hu-  
mility  
Perforce, like those whom Gideon  
school'd with briers.

## VI

## POLAND

How long, O God, shall men be ridden  
down,  
And trampled under by the last and  
least  
Of men? The heart of Poland hath  
not ceased  
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth  
drown  
The fields, and out of every smoulder-  
ing town  
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be in-  
creased,  
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the  
East  
Transgress his ample bound to some  
new crown, —  
Cries to Thee, 'Lord, how long shall  
these things be?  
How long this icy-hearted Musco-  
vite  
Oppress the region?' Us, O Just and  
Good,  
Forgive, who smiled when she was  
torn in three;  
Us, who stand now, when we should  
aid the right —  
A matter to be wept with tears of  
blood!

## VII

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender  
hand,  
And singing airy trifles this or that,  
Light Hope at Beauty's call would  
perch and stand,  
And run thro' every change of sharp  
and flat;  
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,  
When Sleep had bound her in his  
rosy band,  
And chased away the still-recurring  
gnat,  
And woke her with a lay from fairy  
land.  
But now they live with Beauty less  
and less,  
For Hope is other Hope and wanders  
far,  
Nor cares to hsp in love's delicious  
creeds;  
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,  
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,  
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

## VIII

THE form, the form alone is eloquent!  
A nobler yearning never broke her rest  
Than but to dance and sing, be gaily  
drest,  
And win all eyes with all accomplish-  
ment;  
Yet in the whirling dances as we went,  
My fancy made me for a moment blest  
To find my heart so near the beaute-  
ous breast  
That once had power to rob it of con-  
tent.  
A moment came the tenderness of  
tears,  
The phantom of a wish that once could  
move,  
A ghost of passion that no smiles re-  
store —  
For ah! the slight coquette, she can-  
not love,  
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand  
years,  
She still would take the praise, and  
care no more.

## IX

WAN Sculptor, weepst thou to take  
the cast  
Of those dead lineaments that near  
thee lie?



O, sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for  
 the past,  
 In painting some dead friend from  
 memory ?  
 Weep on; beyond his object Love can  
 last.  
 His object lives; more cause to weep  
 have I:  
 My tears, no tears of love, are flowing  
 fast,  
 No tears of love, but tears that Love  
 can die.  
 I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,  
 Nor care to sit beside her where she  
 sits —  
 Ah! pity — hint it not in human tones,  
 But breathe it into earth and close it  
 up  
 With secret death for ever, in the  
 pits  
 Which some green Christmas crams  
 with weary bones.

## X

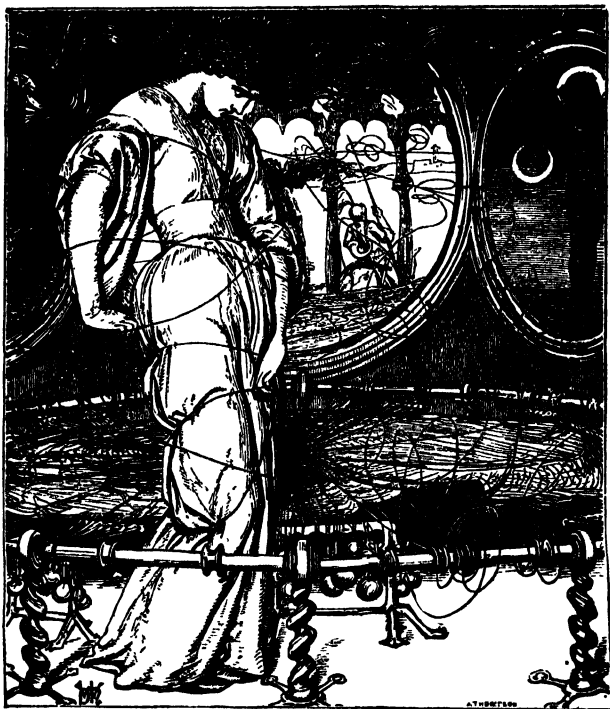
If I were loved, as I desire to be,  
 What is there in the great sphere of  
 the earth,  
 And range of evil between death and  
 birth,  
 That I should fear, — if I were loved  
 by thee ?  
 All the inner, all the outer world of  
 pain  
 Clear Love would pierce and cleave,  
 if thou wert mine,  
 As I have heard that, somewhere in  
 the main,  
 Fresh-water springs come up through  
 bitter brine.  
 'T were joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-  
 hand with thee,

To wait for death — mute — careless  
 of all ills,  
 Apart upon a mountain, tho' the  
 surge  
 Of some new deluge from a thousand  
 hills  
 Flung leagues of roaring foam into  
 the gorge  
 Below us, as far on as eye could see.

## XI

## THE BRIDESMAID

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot  
 was tied,  
 Thine eyes so wept that they could  
 hardly see;  
 Thy sister smiled and said, 'No tears  
 for me !  
 A happy bridesmaid makes a happy  
 bride.'  
 And then, the couple standing side by  
 side,  
 Love lighted down between them full  
 of glee,  
 And over his left shoulder laugh'd at  
 thee,  
 'O happy bridesmaid, make a happy  
 bride.'  
 And all at once a pleasant truth I  
 learn'd,  
 For while the tender service made  
 thee weep,  
 I loved thee for the tear thou couldst  
 not hide,  
 And prest thy hand, and knew the  
 press return'd,  
 And thought, 'My life is sick of single  
 sleep:  
 O happy bridesmaid, make a happy  
 bride !'



"The curse is come upon me," cried  
The Lady of Shalott'

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

### AND OTHER POEMS

#### THE LADY OF SHALOTT

##### PART I

On either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the  
sky;  
And thro' the field the road runs by  
To many-tower'd Camelot;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 1a  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers  
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd 2c  
By slow horses; and unhail'd

The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
 Skimming down to Camelot :  
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
 Or at the casement seen her stand?  
 Or is she known in all the land,  
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early  
 In among the bearded barley,  
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly 30  
 From the river winding clearly,  
 Down to tower'd Camelot ;  
 And by the moon the reaper weary,  
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
 Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy  
 Lady of Shalott.'

## PART II

There she weaves by night and day  
 A magic web with colors gay.  
 She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay 40  
 To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear.  
 There she sees the highway near  
 Winding down to Camelot ; 50  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market girls,  
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;  
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue 60  
 The knights come riding two and  
 two :

She hath no loyal knight and true,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
 For often thro' the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights  
 And music, went to Camelot ;  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed : 70

'I am half sick of shadows,' said  
 The Lady of Shalott.

## PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,  
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
 The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
 A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
 To a lady in his shield,  
 That sparkled on the yellow field, 80  
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
 Like to some branch of stars we see  
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
 The bridle bells rang merrily  
 As he rode down to Camelot ;  
 And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
 A mighty silver bugle hung,  
 And as he rode his armor rung,  
 Beside remote Shalott. 90

All in the blue unclouded weather  
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-  
 leather,  
 The helmet and the helmet-feather  
 Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
 As he rode down to Camelot ;  
 As often thro' the purple night,  
 Below the starry clusters bright,  
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight  
 glow'd ; 100  
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse  
 trode ;  
 From underneath his helmet flow'd  
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
 As he rode down to Camelot.  
 From the bank and from the river  
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
 'Tirra lirra,' by the river  
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom, 109  
 She made three paces thro' the room,  
 She saw the water-lily bloom,  
 She saw the helmet and the plume,  
 She look'd down to Camelot.  
 Out flew the web and floated wide ;  
 The mirror crack'd from side to side ;  
 'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complain-  
ing, 120  
Heavily the low sky raining  
Over tower'd Camelot;  
Down she came and found a boat  
Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse  
Like some bold seer in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance 130  
Did she look to Camelot.  
And at the closing of the day  
She loosed the chain, and down she  
lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Thro' the noises of the night  
She floated down to Camelot;  
And as the boat-head wound along 141  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.  
For ere she reach'd upon the tide 150  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot.  
Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her  
name, 161  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near

Died the sound of royal cheer;  
And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
All the knights at Camelot:  
But Lancelot mused a little space;  
He said, 'She has a lovely face;  
God in his mercy lend her grace, 170  
The Lady of Shalott.'

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

With one black shadow at its feet,  
The house thro' all the level shades,  
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
And silent in its dusty vines;  
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
An empty river-bed before,  
And shallows on a distant shore,  
In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,  
And 'Ave Mary,' night and  
morn, 18  
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all  
alone,  
To live forgotten, and love for-  
lorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
From brow and bosom slowly down  
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew  
Her streaming curls of deepest  
brown

To left and right, and made appear  
Still-lighted in a secret shrine  
Her melancholy eyes divine,  
The home of woe without a tear. 20  
And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,  
'Madonna, sad is night and  
morn,'  
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all  
alone,  
To live forgotten, and love for-  
lorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and  
past  
Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
Low on her knees herself she cast,  
Before Our Lady murmur'd she;  
Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace  
To help me of my weary load.' 30  
And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
The clear perfection of her face.  
'Is this the form,' she made her  
moan,  
'That won his praises night and  
morn?'

And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake  
alone,  
I sleep forgotten, I wake for-  
lorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would  
bleat,

She breathed in sleep a lower  
moan,  
And murmuring, as at night  
and morn,  
She thought, 'My spirit is here  
alone,  
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'



'Low on her knees herself she cast,  
Before Our Lady'

Nor any cloud would cross the  
vault,  
But day increased from heat to heat,  
On stony drought and steaming  
salt; 40  
Till now at noon she slept again,  
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain  
grass,  
And heard her native breezes pass,  
And runlets babbling down the glen.

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream;  
She felt he was and was not there. 50  
She woke; the babble of the stream  
Fell, and, without, the steady glare  
Shrank one sick willow sere and  
small.

The river-bed was dusty-white;  
And all the furnace of the light  
Struck up against the blinding wall.  
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan

More inward than at night or  
morn,  
'Sweet Mother, let me not here  
alone  
Live forgotten and die forlorn.'

And, rising, from her bosom drew 61  
Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be  
true,

To what is loveliest upon earth.'  
An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look at her with slight, and say  
'But now thy beauty flows away,  
So be alone for evermore.'

'O cruel heart,' she changed her  
tone,  
'And cruel love, whose end is  
scorn, 70  
Is this the end, to be left alone,  
To live forgotten, and die for-  
lorn?'

But sometimes in the falling day  
An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look into her eyes and say,  
'But thou shalt be alone no more.'  
And flaming downward over all  
From heat to heat the day decreased,  
And slowly rounded to the east  
The one black shadow from the wall.

'The day to night,' she made her  
moan, 81  
'The day to night, the night to  
morn,  
And day and night I am left alone  
To live forgotten, and love for-  
lorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
There came a sound as of the sea;  
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
And lean'd upon the balcony.  
There all in spaces rosy-bright  
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
And deepening thro' the silent  
spheres 91  
Heaven over heaven rose the night.

And weeping then she made her  
moan,  
'The night comes on that knows  
not morn,  
When I shall cease to be all  
alone,  
To live forgotten, and love for-  
lorn.'

## THE TWO VOICES

A STILL small voice spake unto me,  
'Thou art so full of misery,  
Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said:  
'Let me not cast in endless shade  
What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply:  
'To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil 10  
Of his old husk; from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

'He dried his wings; like gauze they  
grew;  
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  
A living flash of light he flew.'

I said: 'When first the world began,  
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,  
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest  
Proportion, and, above the rest, 20  
Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied:  
'Self-blinded are you by your pride;  
Look up thro' night; the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
That in a boundless universe  
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes and  
fears  
Could find no statelier than his peers  
In yonder hundred million spheres?' 30

It spake, moreover, in my mind:  
'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,  
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:  
'No compound of this earthly ball  
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly:  
'Good soul! suppose I grant it  
thee,  
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?'

'Or will one beam be less intense, 40  
When thy peculiar difference  
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not  
know,'  
But my full heart, that work'd below,  
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:  
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
Surely 't were better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
Nor any train of reason keep; 50  
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt  
weep.'

I said: 'The years with change ad-  
vance;  
If I make dark my countenance,  
I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might  
take,  
Even yet.' But he: 'What drug can  
make  
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept: 'Tho' I should die, I know  
That all about the thorn will blow  
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow; 60

'And men, thro' novel spheres of  
thought  
Still moving after truth long sought,  
Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some  
time,  
Sooner or later, will gray prime  
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for  
light,  
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
Would sweep the tracts of day and  
night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells,  
The fuzzy prickles fire the dells, 71  
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine  
hour,  
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower  
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,  
'Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead. 81

'Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main?

'Or make that morn, from his cold  
crown  
And crystal silence creeping down  
Flood with full daylight glebe and  
town?

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and  
let  
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not  
yet. 90

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

'T were better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining  
weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought  
resign'd,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said: 'When I am gone away, 100  
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,  
Doing dishonor to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,  
'To breathe and loathe, to live and  
sigh,  
Than once from dread of pain to die.

'Sick art thou — a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so  
bound  
To men that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground? 111

'The memory of the wither'd leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garner'd autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed spirit, sleep in trust;  
The right ear that is fill'd with dust  
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,  
'From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride! 120

'Nay — rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warm'd me in the days  
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of  
tongue,  
Among the tents I paused and sung,  
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,  
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the  
spear —

'Waiting to strive a happy strife, 130  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life —

'Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and  
love —

'As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb  
about —

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law; 141

'At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light with-  
draws,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause —

'In some good cause, not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honor'd, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown; 150

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious  
tears,  
When, soil'd with noble dust, he  
hears

His country's war-song thrill his ears :

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman's line is broke  
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.'

'Yea!' said the voice, 'thy dream was  
good,  
While thou abodest in the bud.  
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower, 16  
Who is it that could live an hour ?

'Then comes the check, the change,  
the fall,  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
There is one remedy for all.

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,  
Link'd month to month with such a  
chain  
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death and  
birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth. 170  
So were thy labor little worth.

'That men with knowledge merely  
play'd,  
I told thee — hardly nigher made,  
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and  
blind,  
Named man, may hope some truth to  
find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and  
soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon. 180

'Cry, faint not: either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb: the summits  
slope



Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to  
cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou, 190  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost  
strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

'And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and  
brawl !  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?  
There is one remedy for all.' 201

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,  
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die ?

'I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and  
deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven ;

'Who, rowing hard against the  
stream, 211  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream ;

'But heard, by secret transport led,  
Even in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head —

'Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

'He heeded not reviling tones, 220  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised  
with stones ;

'But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face.'

The sullen answer slid betwixt :  
'Not that the grounds of hope were  
fix'd,  
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

I said : 'I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe, 230  
I fear to slide from bad to worse ;

'And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new ;

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and frozen to permanence :

'For I go, weak from suffering here ;  
Naked I go, and void of cheer :  
What is it that I may not fear ?' 240

'Consider well,' the voice replied,  
'His face, that two hours since hath  
died ;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

'Will he obey when one commands ?  
Or answer should one press his hands ?  
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast ;  
There is no other thing express'd  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and meek ; 250  
Tho' one should smite him on the  
cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

'His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonor to her race —

'His sons grow up that bear his  
name,  
Some grow to honor, some to shame, —  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter  
crave 260  
From winter rains that beat his grave.

'High up the vapors fold and swim;  
About him broods the twilight dim;  
The place he knew forgetteth him.'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said,  
'These things are wrapt in doubt and  
dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are  
dead.'

'The sap dries up; the plant de-  
clines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not death? the outward  
signs?' 270

'I found him when my years were  
few;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.'

'From grave to grave the shadow  
crept;  
In her still place the morning wept;  
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.'

'The simple senses crown'd his head:  
"Omega! thou art Lord," they said,  
"We find no motion in the dead!"'

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease, 280  
Should that plain fact, as taught by  
these,  
Not make him sure that he shall  
cease?

'Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the  
sense?

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.'

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly;  
His heart forebodes a mystery; 290  
He names the name Eternity.'

'That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find.  
He sows himself on every wind.'

'He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And thro' thick veils to apprehend  
A labor working to an end.'

'The end and the beginning vex  
His reason: many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counter  
checks. 300

'He knows a baseness in his blood  
At such strange war with something  
good,  
He may not do the thing he would.'

'Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and with-  
drawn.'

'Ah! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt,

'But thou canst answer not again. 310  
With thine own weapon art thou  
slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.'

'The doubt would rest, I dare not  
solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve.'

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which I  
fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced:

'Where wert thou when thy father  
play'd  
In his free field, and pastime made, 320  
A merry boy in sun and shade?

'A merry boy they call'd him then,  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again;

'Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and  
ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man:

'Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,  
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his  
days; 330

'A life of nothings, nothing worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth!'

'These words,' I said, 'are like the  
rest;  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast:

'But if I grant, thou mightst defend  
The thesis which thy words intend —  
That to begin implies to end;

'Yet how should I for certain hold, 340  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould?

'I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

'It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

'As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await 350  
The slipping thro' from state to  
state;

'As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again;

'So might we, if our state were, such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and  
touch.

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace; 360

'Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of  
night;

'Or if thro' lower lives I came —  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame —

'I might forget my weaker lot;  
For is not our first year forgot?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

'And men, whose reason long was  
blind, 370  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

'Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory;

'For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own material prime?

'Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic  
gleams, 380  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —

'Of something felt, like something  
here;  
Of something done, I know not where;  
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. 'I talk,' said  
he,  
'Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality.'

'But thou,' said I, 'hast missed thy  
mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal  
ark,  
By making all the horizon dark. 390

'Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might en-  
sue  
With this old soul in organs new?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human  
breath  
Has ever truly long'd for death.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are  
scant,  
O, life, not death, for which we pant;  
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn. 400  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn  
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to  
peal.

On to God's house the people prest ;  
 Passing the place where each must  
     rest, <sup>410</sup>  
 Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,  
 With measured footfall firm and mild,  
 And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
 Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
 Wearing the rose of womanhood.

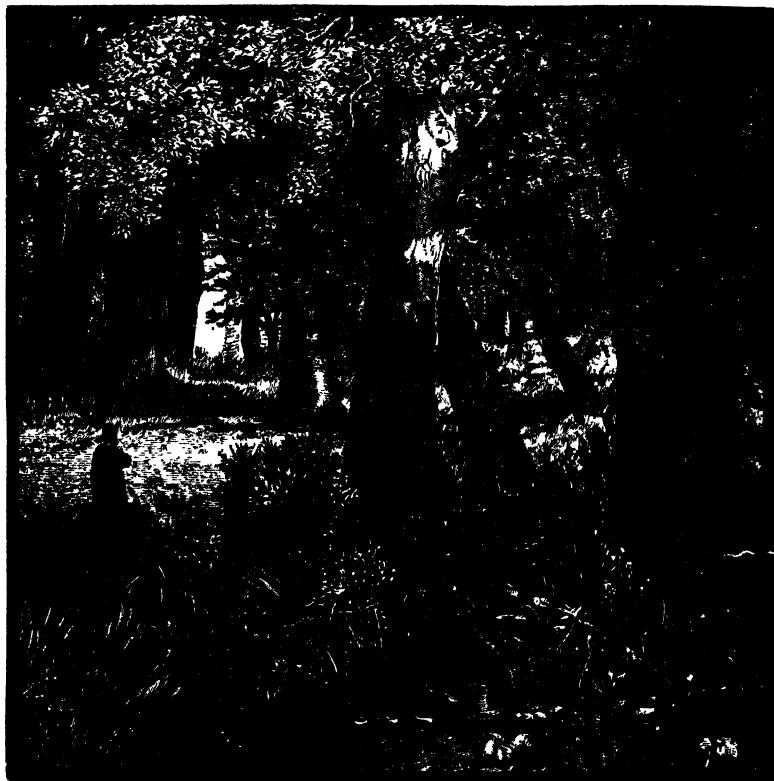
And in their double love secure,  
 The little maiden walk'd demure,  
 Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet, <sup>421</sup>  
 My frozen heart began to beat,  
 Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on ;  
 I spoke, but answer came there  
     none ;  
 The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
 A little whisper silver-clear,  
 A murmur, ' Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighborhood,  
 A notice faintly understood, <sup>431</sup>  
 ' I see the end, and know the good.'



' I wonder'd, while I paced along ;  
 The woods were fill'd so full with song '

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes ;

Such seem'd the whisper at my side ·  
'What is it thou knowest, sweet  
voice?' I cried. 440  
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied ;

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the  
shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature's living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent. 450

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers ;  
You scarce could see the grass for  
flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along ;  
The woods were fill'd so full with song,  
There seem'd no room for sense of  
wrong ;

And all so variously wrought,  
I marvell'd how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice 460  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Re-  
joice!'

#### THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
His double chin, his portly size,  
And who that knew him could forget  
The busy wrinkles round his eyes ?  
The slow wise smile that, round about  
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,  
Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
And full of dealings with the world ?

In yonder chair I see him sit,  
Three fingers round the old silver  
cup— 10

I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
At his own jest— gray eyes lit up  
With summer lightnings of a soul  
So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,  
His memory scarce can make me  
sad.

Yet fill my glass ; give me one kiss :  
My own sweet Alice, we must die.  
There's somewhat in this world amiss  
Shall be unriddled by and by. 20  
There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
But more is taken quite away.  
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth ?  
I least should breathe a thought of  
pain.

Would God renew me from my birth,  
I'd almost live my life again ;  
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
And once again to woo thee mine—  
It seems in after-dinner talk 31  
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy  
Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
Where this old mansion mounted high  
Looks down upon the village spire ;  
For even here, where I and you  
Have lived and loved alone so long,  
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'  
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove 41  
In firry woodlands making moan ;  
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
I had no motion of my own.

For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
Before I dream'd that pleasant  
dream—

Still hither thither idly sway'd  
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear  
The milldam rushing down with  
noise, 50

And see the minnows everywhere  
In crystal eddies glance and poise,  
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
Below the range of stepping-stones,

Or those three chestnuts near, that  
hung  
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
When after roving in the woods  
(T was April then), I came and sat  
Below the chestnuts, when their buds  
Were glistening to the breezy blue, 61  
And on the slope, an absent fool,  
I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
An echo from a measured strain,  
Beat time to nothing in my head  
From some odd corner of the brain.  
It haunted me, the morning long,  
With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
The phantom of a silent song, 71  
That went and came a thousand  
times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood  
I watch'd the little circles die;  
They past into the level flood,  
And there a vision caught my eye;  
The reflex of a beauteous form,  
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set, 81  
That morning, on the casement-edge  
A long green box of mignonette,  
And you were leaning from the  
ledge;  
And when I raised my eyes, above  
They met with two so full and  
bright—  
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,  
That these have never lost their  
light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear  
That I should die an early death; 90  
For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
And fill'd the breast with purer  
breath.  
My mother thought, What ails the boy?  
For I was alter'd, and began  
To move about the house with joy,  
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,

The sleepy pool above the dam,  
The pool beneath it never still, 100  
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,  
The dark round of the dripping  
wheel,  
The very air about the door  
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
When April nights began to blow,  
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
I saw the village lights below;  
I knew your taper far away,  
And full at heart of trembling  
hope, 110  
From off the wold I came, and lay  
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the  
mill;  
And 'by that lamp,' I thought, 'she  
sits!'

The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
(Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.  
'O, that I were beside her now!  
O, will she answer if I call?  
O, would she give me vow for vow,  
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?') 120

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;  
And, in the pauses of the wind,  
Sometimes I heard you sing within;  
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the  
blind.  
At last you rose and moved the light,  
And the long shadow of the chair  
Flitted across into the night,  
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,  
The lanes, you know, were white  
with may; 130  
Your ripe lips moved not, but your  
cheek  
Flush'd like the coming of the  
day;  
And so it was — half-sly, half-shy,  
You would, and would not, little  
one!  
Although I pleaded tenderly,  
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought  
To yield consent to my desire: 138  
She wish'd me happy, but she thought  
I might have look'd a little higher;



'And rose, and, with a silent grace  
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart'

And I was young — too young to wed:  
'Yet must I love her for your sake;  
Go fetch your Alice here,' she said:  
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:  
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;  
This dress and that by turns you tried,  
Too fearful that you should not  
please.

I loved you better for your fears,  
I knew you could not look but well;  
And dews, that would have fallen in  
tears, 151  
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,  
The doubt my mother would not see;

She spoke at large of many things,  
And at the last she spoke of  
me;

And turning look'd upon your face,  
As near this door you sat apart,  
And rose, and, with a silent grace  
Approaching, press'd you heart to  
heart. 160

Ah, well — but sing the foolish song  
I gave you, Alice, on the day  
When, arm in arm, we went along,  
A pensive pair, and you were gay  
With bridal flowers — that I may seem,  
As in the nights of old, to lie  
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,  
While those full chestnuts whisper  
by.

It is the miller's daughter,  
And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
That I would be the jewel <sup>171</sup>  
That trembles in her ear;  
For hid in ringlets day and night,  
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle  
About her dainty dainty waist,  
And her heart would beat against me,  
In sorrow and in rest;  
And I should know if it beat right,  
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace, <sup>181</sup>  
And all day long to fall and rise  
Upon her balmy bosom,  
With her laughter or her sighs;  
And I would lie so light, so light,  
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells—  
True love interprets—right alone.  
His light upon the letter dwells,  
For all the spirit is his own. <sup>190</sup>  
So, if I waste words now, in truth  
You must blame Love. His early  
rage  
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,  
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
Like mine own life to me thou art,  
Where Past and Present, wound in one,  
Do make a garland for the heart;  
So sing that other song I made,  
Half-anger'd with my happy lot, <sup>200</sup>  
The day, when in the chestnut shade  
I found the blue forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,  
Can he pass, and we forget?  
Many suns arise and set;  
Many a chance the years beget;  
Love the gift is Love the debt.  
Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret;  
Love is made a vague regret; <sup>210</sup>  
Eyes with idle tears are wet;  
Idle habit links us yet.  
What is love? for we forget:  
Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True  
wife,  
Round my true heart thine arms  
entwine;  
My other dearer life in life,  
Look thro' my very soul with thine!  
Untouch'd with any shade of years,  
May those kind eyes for ever dwell!

They have not shed a many tears, <sup>221</sup>  
Dear eyes, since first I knew them  
well.

Yet tears they shed; they had their  
part  
Of sorrow; for when time was  
ripe,  
The still affection of the heart  
Became an outward breathing type,  
That into stillness past again,  
And left a want unknown before;  
Although the loss had brought us  
pain,  
That loss but made us love the  
more, <sup>230</sup>

With farther lookings on. The kiss,  
The woven arms, seem but to be  
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
The comfort, I have found in thee;  
But that God bless thee, dear—who  
wrought  
Two spirits to one equal mind—  
With blessings beyond hope or thought,  
With blessings which no words can  
find.

Arise, and let us wander forth  
To yon old mill across the wolds; <sup>240</sup>  
For look, the sunset, south and north,  
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
And fires your narrow casement glass,  
Touching the sullen pool below;  
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

## FATIMA

O LOVE, Love, Love! O withering  
might!  
O sun, that from thy noonday height  
Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light.  
Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and  
blind,  
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
Below the city's eastern towers;  
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers;  
I roll'd among the tender flowers;  
I crush'd them on my breast, my  
mouth;



I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his  
name,  
From my swift blood that went and  
came  
A thousand little shafts of flame  
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.  
O Love, O fire! once he drew  
With one long kiss my whole soul  
thro'  
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
He cometh quickly; from below  
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens,  
blow

Before him, striking on my brow.  
In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
Down-deepening from swoon to  
swoon,  
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
And from beyond the noon a fire  
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher  
The skies stoop down in their desire;  
And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce  
delight,  
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,  
All naked in a sultry sky,  
Droops blinded with his shining eye;  
I *will* possess him or will die.

I will grow round him in his place,  
Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

### GENONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
The swimming vapor slopes athwart  
the glen,

Puts forth an arm, and creeps from  
pine to pine,  
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either  
hand

The lawns and meadow-ledges mid-  
way down  
Hang rich in flowers, and far below  
them roars

The long brook falling thro' the cloven  
ravine

In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
Stands up and takes the morning; but  
in front

The gorges, opening wide apart, re-  
veal

Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon  
Mournful Genone, wandering forlorn  
Of Paris, once her playmate on the  
hills.

Her cheek had lost the rose, and round  
her neck  
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in  
rest.

She, leaning on a fragment twined  
with vine,  
Sang to the stillness, till the moun-  
tain-shade  
Sloped downward to her seat from the  
upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
For now the noonday quiet holds the  
bill;

The grasshopper is silent in the grass;  
The lizard, with his shadow on the  
stone,

Rests like a shadow, and the winds are  
dead.

The purple flower droops, the golden  
bee

Is lily-cradled; I alone awake.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of  
love,

My heart is breaking, and my eyes  
are dim,

And I am all weary of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

Hear me, O earth, hear me, O hills, O  
caves

That house the cold crown'd snake!  
O mountain brooks,

I am the daughter of a River-God,  
Hear me, for I will speak, and build  
up all

My sorrow with my song, as yonder  
walls

Rose slowly to a music slowly  
breathed,

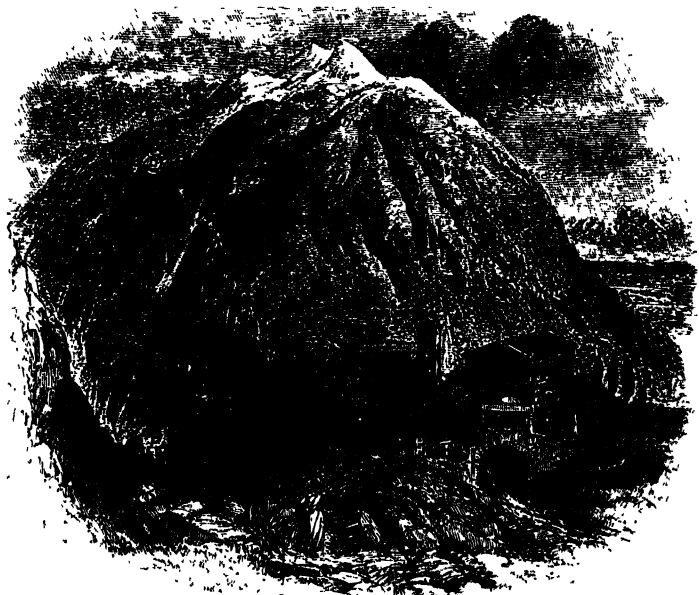
A cloud that gather'd shape ; for it  
 may be  
 That, while I speak of it, a little  
 while  
 My heart may wander from its deeper  
 woe.

'O mother Ida, many - fountain'd  
 Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 I waited underneath the dawning hills;  
 Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-  
 dark,  
 And dewy-dark aloft the mountain  
 pine.  
 Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
 Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,  
 white-hooved, <sup>50</sup>  
 Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Far-off the torrent call'd me from the  
 cleft ;

Far up the solitary morning smote  
 The streaks of virgin snow. With  
 down-dropt eyes  
 I sat alone ; white-breasted like a  
 star  
 Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leo-  
 pard skin  
 Droop'd from his shoulder, but his  
 sunny hair  
 Cluster'd about his temples like a  
 God's ;  
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam  
 bow brightens <sup>60</sup>  
 When the wind blows the foam, and  
 all my heart  
 Went forth to embrace him coming  
 ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-  
 white palm  
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian  
 gold,



'Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel'

That smelt ambrosially, and while I  
look'd  
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of  
speech

Came down upon my heart :

“My own Enone,  
Beautiful-brow'd Enone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind  
ingraven

‘For the most fair,’ would seem to  
award it thine,

As lovelier than whatever Orcad haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all  
grace

Of movement, and the charm of mar-  
ried brows.”

‘Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to  
mine,  
And added, “This was cast upon the  
board,

When all the full-faced presence of  
the Gods

Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; where-  
upon

Rose feud, with question unto whom  
‘t were due ;

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-  
eve,

Delivering, that to me, by common  
voice

Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,  
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within  
the cave

Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest  
pine,

Mayst well behold them unbeheld,  
unheard

Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of  
Gods.”

‘Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
It was the deep midnoon ; one silvery  
cloud

Had lost his way between the piny  
sides

Of this long glen. Then to the bower  
they came,

Naked they came to that smooth-  
swarded bower,

And at their feet the crocus brake like  
fire,

Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies ; and a wind arose,

And overhead the wandering ivy and  
vine,

This way and that, in many a wild  
festoon

Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled  
boughs

With bunch and berry and flower thro’  
and thro’.

‘O mother Ida, harken ere I die.

On the tree-tops a crested peacock  
lit,

And o’er him flow’d a golden cloud,  
and lean’d

Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant  
dew.

Then first I heard the voice of her to  
whom

Coming thro’ heaven, like a light that  
grows

Larger and clearer, with one mind the  
Gods

Rise up for reverence. She to Paris  
made

Proffer of royal power, ample rule

Unquestion’d, overflowing revenue  
Wherewith to embellish state, “from

many a vale  
And river-sunder’d champaign clothed

with corn,  
Or labor’d mine undrainable of ore.

Honor,” she said, “and homage, tax  
and toll,

From many an inland town and haven  
large,

Mast-throng’d beneath her shadowing  
citadel

In glassy bays among her tallest  
towers.”

‘O mother Ida, harken ere I die.

Still she spake on and still she spake  
of power,

“Which in all action is the end of  
all ;

Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-  
bred

And throned of wisdom—from all  
neighbor crowns

Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon

from me,  
From me, heaven’s queen, Paris, to

thee king-born,  
A shepherd all thy life but yet king

born,

Should come most welcome, seeing  
men, in power  
Only, are likest Gods, who have at-  
tain'd  
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
Above the thunder, with undying  
bliss<sup>130</sup>  
In knowledge of their own supre-  
macy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She ceased, and Paris held the costly  
fruit  
Out at arm's-length, so much the  
thought of power  
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where  
she stood  
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared  
limbs  
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed  
spear  
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
The while, above, her full and earnest  
eye  
Over her snow-cold breast and angry  
cheek<sup>140</sup>  
Kept watch, waiting decision, made  
reply:

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge,  
self-control,  
These three alone lead life to sover-  
eign power.  
Yet not for power (power of herself  
Would come uncalled for) but to live  
by law,  
Acting the law we live by without  
fear;  
And, because right is right, to follow  
right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of conse-  
quence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Again she said: "I woo thee not with  
gifts.<sup>150</sup>  
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I  
am,  
So shalt thou find me fairest.  
Yet, indeed,  
If gazing on divinity disrobed  
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of  
fair,  
Unbias'd by self-profit, O, rest thee  
sure

That I shall love thee well and cleave  
to thee,  
So that my vigor, wedded to thy  
blood,  
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a  
God's,  
To push thee forward thro' a life of  
shocks,<sup>160</sup>  
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance  
grow  
Sinew'd with action, and the full-  
grown will,  
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,  
Commeasure perfect freedom."  
Here she ceas'd,  
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O  
Paris,  
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me  
not,  
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is  
me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,<sup>170</sup>  
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Pa-  
pian wells,  
With rosy slender fingers backward  
drew  
From her warm brows and bosom her  
deep hair  
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid  
throat  
And shoulder; from the violets her  
light foot  
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded  
form  
Between the shadows of the vine-  
bunches  
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she  
moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She with a subtle smile in her mild  
eyes,<sup>180</sup>  
The herald of her triumph, drawing  
nigh  
Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise  
thee  
The fairest and most loving wife in  
Greece."  
She spoke and laugh'd; I shut my  
sight for fear;  
But when I look'd, Paris had raised  
his arm,  
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes.

As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
And I was left alone within the bower ;  
And from that time to this I am alone,  
And I shall be alone until I die. 190

‘ Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Fairest — why fairest wife ? am I not  
fair ?

My love hath told me so a thousand  
times.

Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
When I past by, a wild and wanton  
pard,

Eyed like the evening star, with play-  
ful tail

Crouch’d fawning in the weed. Most  
loving is she ?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that  
my arms

Were wound about thee, and my hot  
lips prest

Close, close to thine in that quick-fall-  
ing dew 200

Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn  
rains

Flash in the pools of whirling Simois !

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
They came, they cut away my tallest  
pines,

My tall dark pines, that plumed the  
craggy ledge

High over the blue gorge, and all be-  
tween

The snowy peak and snow-white cata-  
ract

Foster’d the callow eaglet — from be-  
neath

Whose thick mysterious boughs in the  
dark morn

The panther’s roar came muffled, while  
I sat 210

Low in the valley. Never, never more  
Shall lone Enone see the morning mist

Sweep thro’ them ; never see them  
overlaid

With narrow moonlit slips of silver  
cloud,

Between the loud stream and the  
trembling stars.

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I wish that somewhere in the ruin’d

folds,  
Among the fragments tumbled from  
the glens,

Or the dry thickets, I could meet with  
her

The Abominable, that uninvited came  
Into the fair Peleñan banquet-hall, 221

And cast the golden fruit upon the  
board,

And bred this change ; that I might  
speak my mind,

And tell her to her face how much I  
hate

Her presence, hated both of Gods and  
men.

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I  
die.

Hath he not sworn his love a thousand  
times,

In this green valley, under this green  
hill,

Even on this hand, and sitting on this  
stone ?

Seal’d it with kisses ? water’d it with  
tears ? 230

O happy tears, and how unlike to  
these !

O happy heaven, how canst thou see  
my face ?

O happy earth, how canst thou bear  
my weight ?

O death, death, death, thou ever-float-  
ing cloud,

There are enough unhappy on this  
earth,

Pass by the happy souls, that love to  
live ;

I pray thee, pass before my light of  
life,

And shadow all my soul, that I may  
die.

Thou weighest heavy on the heart  
within,

Weigh heavy on my eyelids ; let me  
die. 240

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts

Do shape themselves within me, more  
and more,

Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
Dead sounds at night come from the  
inmost hills,

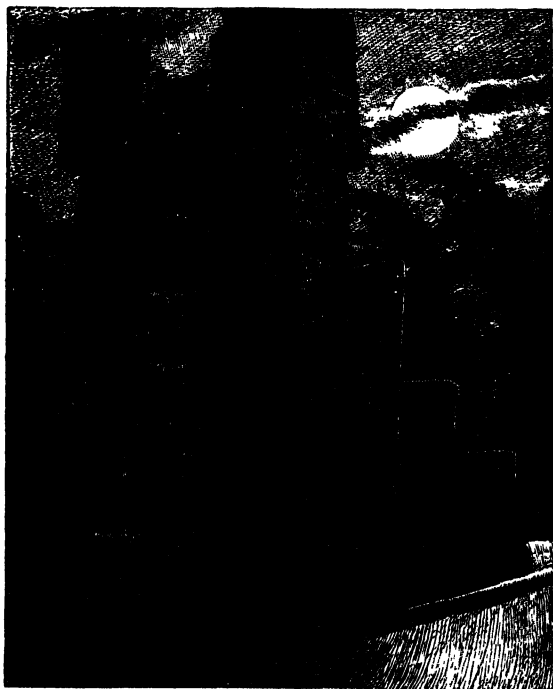
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly  
see

My far-off doubtful purpose, as a  
mother

Conjectures of the features of her child

Ere it is born. Her child!—a shud-  
 der comes  
 Across me: never child be born of me,  
 Unblest, to vex me with his father's  
 eyes! 251

What this may be I know not, but I  
 know  
 That, wheresoe'er I am by night and  
 day,  
 All earth and air seem only burning fire.'



'The wind is blowing in turret and tree'

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone.  
 Lest their shrill happy laughter come  
 to me  
 Walking the cold and starless road of  
 death  
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
 With the Greek woman. I will rise  
 and go  
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars come  
 forth  
 Talk with the great Cassandra, for she  
 says 259  
 A fire dances before her, and a sound  
 Rings ever in her ears of armed men.

### THE SISTERS

WE were two daughters of one race;  
 She was the fairest in the face.

The wind is blowing in turret and  
 tree.

They were together, and she fell;  
 Therefore revenge became me well.

O, the earl was fair to see!

She died; she went to burning flame;  
 She mix'd her ancient blood with  
 shame.

The wind is howling in turret and  
 tree.

Whole weeks and months, and early  
and late,  
To win his love I lay in wait.  
O, the earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bade him come;  
I won his love, I brought him home.  
The wind is roaring in turret and tree.  
And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head.  
O, the earl was fair to see!

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest,  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.  
The wind is raging in turret and tree.  
I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well.  
O, the earl was fair to see!

I rose up in the silent night;  
I made my dagger sharp and bright.  
The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
As half-asleep his breath he drew,  
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.  
O, the earl was fair to see!

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,  
He look'd so grand when he was dead.  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
I wrapt his body in the sheet,  
And laid him at his mother's feet.  
O, the earl was fair to see!

## TO —

## WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of allegory —  
For you will understand it — of a soul,  
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering  
weeds,  
A glorious devil, large in heart and  
brain,  
That did love beauty only — beauty  
seen  
In all varieties of mould and mind —  
And knowledge for its beauty; or if  
good.

Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge  
are three sisters  
That dote upon each other, friends to  
man,  
Living together under the same roof,  
And never can be sunder'd without  
tears.  
And he that shuts Love out, in turn  
shall be  
Shut out from Love, and on her thresh-  
old lie  
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
Was common clay ta'en from the com-  
mon earth  
Moulded by God, and temper'd with  
the tears  
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

## THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-  
house,  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.  
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and ca-  
rouse,  
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as bur-  
nish'd brass,  
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or  
shelf  
The rock rose clear, or winding  
stair.  
My soul would live alone unto herself<sup>10</sup>  
In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and  
round,' I said,  
'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stead-  
fast shade  
Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer read-  
ily:  
'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
In this great mansion, that is built for  
me,  
So royal-rich and wide.'  
20

Four courts I made, East, West and  
 South and North,  
 In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
 The golden gorge of dragons spouted  
 forth  
 A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there  
 ran a row  
 Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty  
 woods,  
 Echoing all night to that sonorous  
 flow  
 Of spouted fountain-floods ;

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
 That lent broad verge to distant  
 lands, <sup>30</sup>  
 Far as the wild swan wings, to where  
 the sky  
 Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in  
 one swell  
 Across the mountain stream'd below  
 In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
 Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue  
 seem'd  
 To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
 A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd  
 From out a golden cup. <sup>40</sup>

So that she thought, 'And who shall  
 gaze upon  
 My palace with unblinded eyes,  
 While this great bow will waver in  
 the sun,  
 And that sweet incense rise ?'

For that sweet incense rose and never  
 fail'd,  
 And, while day sank or mounted  
 higher,  
 The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
 Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd  
 and traced,  
 Would seem slow-flaming crimson  
 fires <sup>50</sup>  
 From shadow'd grots of arches inter-  
 laced,  
 And tipt with frost-like spires.

. . . . .

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
 That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
 Thro' which the livelong day my soul  
 did pass,  
 Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the pal-  
 ace stood,  
 All various, each a perfect whole  
 From living Nature, fit for every mood  
 And change of my still soul. <sup>60</sup>

For some were hung with arras green  
 and blue,  
 Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
 Where with puff'd cheek the belted  
 hunter blew  
 His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red — a tract  
 of sand,  
 And some one pacing there alone,  
 Who paced for ever in a glimmering  
 land,  
 Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry  
 waves.  
 You seem'd to hear them climb and  
 fall <sup>70</sup>  
 And roar rock-thwarted under bellow-  
 ing caves,  
 Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
 By herds upon an endless plain,  
 The ragged rims of thunder brooding  
 low,  
 With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry  
 toil.  
 In front they bound the sheaves.  
 Behind  
 Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
 And hoary to the wind. <sup>80</sup>

And one a foreground black with  
 stones and slags ;  
 Beyond, a line of heights ; and higher  
 All barr'd with long white cloud the  
 scornful crags ;  
 And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home — gray twi-  
 light pour'd





' In a clear-wall'd city on the sea,  
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept Saint Cecily '

On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep — all things in order  
stored,  
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape  
fair,

As fit for every mood of mind, 90  
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern,  
was there,  
Not less than truth design'd.

. . . . .

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
Beneath branch-work of costly sard-  
onyx  
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in' a clear-wall'd city on the  
sea,  
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept Saint  
Cecily ;  
An angel look'd at her. 100

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise  
A group of Houris bow'd to see  
The dying Islamite, with hands and  
eyes  
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded  
son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his  
ear,

To list a foot-fall, ere he saw <sup>110</sup>  
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian  
king to hear  
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops en-  
grail'd,

And many a tract of palm and  
rice,  
The throne of Indian Cama slowly  
sail'd

A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew un-  
clasp'd,

From off her shoulder backward  
borne;

From one hand droop'd a crocus; one  
hand grasp'd

The mild bull's golden horn <sup>120</sup>

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy  
thigh

Half-buried in the eagle's down,  
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the  
sky

Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone; but every legend  
fair

Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
Carved out of Nature for itself was  
there,

Not less than life design'd.

. . . . .

Then in the towers I placed great bells  
that swung,

Moved of themselves, with silver  
sound; <sup>130</sup>

And with choice paintings of wise men  
I hung

The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph  
strong,

Beside him Shakespeare bland and  
mild;



'Mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son'

And there the world-worn Dante  
grasp'd his song,  
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;  
A million wrinkles carved his skin;  
A hundred winters snow'd upon his  
breast,  
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every  
land  
So wrought they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden  
slow,  
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads  
and stings;  
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break  
or bind  
All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick  
man declined,  
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod; and those  
great bells  
Began to chime. She took her  
throne;  
She sat betwixt the shining oriels,  
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost oriels' colored  
flame  
Two godlike faces gazed below;  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd  
Verulam,  
The first of those who know.

And all those names that in their  
motion were  
Full-welling fountain-heads of  
change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were bla-  
zon'd fair  
In diverse raiment strange;

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,  
emerald, blue,  
Flush'd in her temples and her  
eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from Mem-  
non, drew  
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to pro-  
long  
Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd  
song  
Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feast-  
ful mirth,  
Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, lord of the visible  
earth,  
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: 'All these  
are mine,  
And let the world have peace or  
wars,  
'Tis one to me.' She — when young  
night divine  
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious  
toils —  
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious  
oils  
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her  
hands and cried,  
'I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich and  
wide  
Be flatter'd to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my various  
eyes!  
O shapes and hues that please me  
well!  
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O Godlike isolation which art mine,  
I can but count thee perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening  
droves of swine  
That range on yonder plain.

'In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient  
skin,  
They graze and wallow, breed and  
sleep;  
And oft some brainless devil enters  
in,  
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she  
prate  
And of the rising from the dead,  
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd  
Fate;  
And at the last she said :

'I take possession of man's mind and  
deed.  
I care not what the sects may  
brawl. <sup>210</sup>  
I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
But contemplating all.'

Full oft the riddle of the painful  
earth  
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
Yet not the less held she her solemn  
mirth,  
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd ; so  
three years  
She prosper'd ; on the fourth she  
fell,  
Like Herod, when the shout was in  
his ears,  
Struck thro' with pangs of hell. <sup>220</sup>

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
God, before whom ever lie bare  
The abysmal deeps of personality,  
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she  
turn'd her sight  
The airy hand confusion wrought,  
Wrote, 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite  
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her soli-  
tude  
Fell on her, from which mood was  
born <sup>230</sup>  
Scorn of herself ; again, from out that  
mood  
Laughter at her self-scorn.

'What! is not this my place of  
strength,' she said,  
'My spacious mansion built for me,  
Whereof the strong foundation-stones  
were laid  
Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes ; and unawares  
On white-eyed phantasms weeping  
tears of blood,  
And horrible nightmares, <sup>240</sup>

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of  
flame,  
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon  
she came,  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without  
light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my  
soul,  
Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal ;

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars  
of sand,  
Left on the shore, that hears all  
night <sup>250</sup>  
The plunging seas draw backward  
from the land  
Their moon-led waters white ;

A star that with the choral starry  
dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing  
saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circum-  
stance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had  
curl'd.  
'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone  
hall,  
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of  
this world ;  
One deep, deep silence all !' <sup>260</sup>

She, mouldering with the dull earth's  
mouldering sod,  
Inwraught tenfold in slothful shame,  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
Lost to her place and name ;

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,  
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confused with  
fears,  
And ever worse with growing  
time, <sup>270</sup>  
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
And all alone in crime.

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt  
round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully  
sound  
Of human footsteps fall :

As in strange lands a traveller walk-  
ing slow,  
In doubt and great perplexity,  
A little before moonrise hears the low  
Moan of an unknown sea ; <sup>280</sup>

And knows not if it be thunder, or a  
sound  
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep  
cry  
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh,  
'I have found  
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.  
There comes no murmur of reply.  
What is it that will take away my sin,  
And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly  
finished,  
She threw her royal robes away. <sup>290</sup>  
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she  
said,  
'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace towers,  
that are  
So lightly, beautifully built ;  
Perchance I may return with others  
there  
When I have purged my guilt.'

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,  
Of me you shall not win renown :

You thought to break a country heart  
For pastime, ere you went to town  
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
I saw the snare, and I retired ;  
The daughter of a hundred earls,  
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
I know you proud to bear your name,  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
Too proud to care from whence  
came.

Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
A heart that dotes on truer charms.  
A simple maiden in her flower  
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Some meeker pupil you must find,  
For, were you queen of all that is,  
I could not stoop to such a mind.  
You sought to prove how I could love,  
And my disdain is my reply.  
The lion on your old stone gates  
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
You put strange memories in my  
head.  
Not thrice your branching limes have  
blown  
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.  
O, your sweet eyes, your low replies !  
A great enchantress you may be ;  
But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
When thus he met his mother's view,  
She had the passions of her kind,  
She spake some certain truths of you.  
Indeed I heard one bitter word  
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;  
Her manners had not that repose  
Which stamps the caste of Vere de  
Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
There stands a spectre in your hall ;  
The guilt of blood is at your door ;  
You changed a wholesome heart to  
gall.

You held your course without remorse,  
To make him trust his modest worth,  
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,  
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 From yon blue heavens above us bent  
 The gardener Adam and his wife  
 Smile at the claims of long descent.  
 Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
 'Tis only noble to be good.  
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
 And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 You pine among your halls and towers;  
 The languid light of your proud eyes  
 Is wearied of the rolling hours.  
 In glowing health, with boundless wealth,  
 But sickening of a vague disease,  
 You know so ill to deal with time,  
 You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 If time be heavy on your hands,  
 Are there no beggars at your gate,  
 Nor any poor about your lands?  
 O, teach the orphan-boy to read,  
 Or teach the orphan-girl to sew;  
 Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
 And let the foolish yeoman go.

### THE MAY QUEEN

You must wake and call me early,  
 call me early, mother dear;  
 To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of  
 all the glad New-year;  
 Of all the glad New-year, mother, the  
 maddest merriest day,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
 I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black, black eye, they  
 say, but none so bright as mine;  
 There's Margaret and Mary, there's  
 Kate and Caroline;  
 But none so fair as little Alice in all  
 the land they say,  
 So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
 I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother,  
 that I shall never wake,  
 If you do not call me loud when the  
 day begins to break;  
 But I must gather knots of flowers,  
 and buds and garlands gay,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
 I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think  
 ye should I see  
 But Robin leaning on the bridge be  
 neath the hazel-tree?  
 He thought of that sharp look, mother,  
 I gave him yesterday,  
 But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
 I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother,  
 for I was all in white,  
 And I ran by him without speaking,  
 like a flash of light.  
 They call me cruel-hearted, but I care  
 not what they say,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
 I'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but  
 that can never be;  
 They say his heart is breaking, mother  
 — what is that to me?  
 There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me  
 any summer day,  
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow  
 to the green,  
 And you'll be there, too, mother, to  
 see me made the Queen:  
 For the shepherd lads on every side  
 'ill come from far away,  
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has  
 woven its wavy bowers,  
 And by the meadow-trenches blow the  
 faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;  
 And the wild marsh-marigold shines  
 like fire in swamps and hollows  
 gray,



'It is the last New-year that I shall ever see'

And I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
mother, I'm to be Queen o' the  
May.

The night-winds come and go, mother,  
upon the meadow-grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem  
to brighten as they pass;  
There will not be a drop of rain the  
whole of the livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
mother, I'm to be Queen o' the  
May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh  
and green and still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are  
over all the hill,  
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill  
merrily glance and play,

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I'm to be Queen o' the May. 40

So you must wake and call me early,  
call me early, mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time  
of all the glad New-year;  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the  
maddest merriest day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,  
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

#### NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call  
me early, mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the  
glad New-year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall  
ever see,

Then you may lay me low i' the  
mould and think no more of  
me.

To-night I saw the sun set; he set and  
left behind

The good old year, the dear old  
time, and all my peace of  
mind;

And the New-year's coming up, mo-  
ther, but I shall never see

The blossom on the blackthorn, the  
leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers;  
we had a merry day;

Beneath the hawthorn on the green  
they made me Queen of May;

And we danced about the may-pole  
and in the hazel copse,

Till Charles's Wain came out above  
the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills;  
the frost is on the pane.

I only wish to live till the snowdrops  
come again;

I wish the snow would melt and the  
sun come out on high;

I long to see a flower so before the day  
I die.

The building rook'll caw from the  
windy tall elm-tree,

And the tufted plover pipe along the  
fallow lea,

And the swallow'll come back again  
with summer o'er the wave,

But I shall lie alone, mother, within  
the mouldering grave.

Upon the 'chancel-casement, and upon  
that grave of mine,

In the early early morning the sum-  
mer sun'll shine,

Before the red cock crows from the  
farm upon the hill,

When you are warm-asleep, mother,  
and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother,  
beneath the waning light

You'll never see me more in the long  
gray fields at night;

When from the dry dark wold the sum-  
mer airs blow cool

On the oat-grass and the sword-grass,  
and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just be-  
neath the hawthorn shade,

And you'll come sometimes and see  
me where I am lowly laid.

I shall not forget you, mother, I shall  
hear you when you pass,

With your feet above my head in the  
long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but  
you'll forgive me now;

You'll kiss me, my own mother, and  
forgive me ere I go;

Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let  
your grief be wild;

You should not fret for me, mother,  
you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from  
cut my resting-place;

Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall  
look upon your face;

Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall  
harken what you say,

And be often, often with you when  
you think I'm far away.

Good-night, good-night, when I have  
said good-night for evermore,

And you see me carried out from the  
threshold of the door,

Don't let Effie come to see me till my  
grave be growing green.

She'll be a better child to you than  
ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the  
granary floor.

Let her take 'em, they are hers; I shall  
never garden more;

But tell her, when I'm gone, to train  
the rosebush that I set

About the parlor-window and the box  
of mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother; call me be-  
fore the day is born.

All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep  
at morn;

But I would see the sun rise upon the  
glad New-year,

So, if you're waking, call me, call me  
early, mother dear.



## CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and  
yet alive I am;  
And in the fields all round I hear the  
bleating of the lamb.  
How sadly, I remember, rose the morn-  
ing of the year!  
To die before the snowdrop came, and  
now the violet's here.

O, sweet is the new violet, that comes  
beneath the skies,  
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice  
to me that cannot rise,  
And sweet is all the land about, and  
all the flowers that blow,  
And sweeter far is death than life to  
me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to  
leave the blessed sun,  
And now it seems as hard to stay, and  
yet His will be done!  
But still I think it can't be long before  
I find release;  
And that good man, the clergyman,  
has told me words of peace.

O, blessings on his kindly voice and  
on his silver hair!  
And blessings on his whole life long,  
until he meet me there!  
O, blessings on his kindly heart and on  
his silver head!  
A thousand times I blest him, as he  
knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he  
show'd me all the sin.  
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late,  
there's One will let me in;  
Nor would I now be well, mother,  
again, if that could be,  
For my desire is but to pass to Him  
that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother,  
or the death-watch beat,  
There came a sweeter token when the  
night and morning meet;  
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put  
your hand in mine,  
And Effie on the other side, and I will  
tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard  
the angels call;  
It was when the moon was setting, and  
the dark was over all;  
The trees began to whisper, and the  
wind began to roll,  
And in the wild March-morning I heard  
them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of  
you and Effie dear;  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I  
no longer here;  
With all my strength I pray'd for both,  
and so I felt resign'd,  
And up the valley came a swell of music  
on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I  
listen'd in my bed,  
And then did something speak to me —  
I know not what was said;  
For great delight and shuddering took  
hold of all my mind,  
And up the valley came again the  
music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, 'It's  
not for them, it's mine.'  
And if it come three times, I thought,  
I take it for a sign.  
And once again it came, and close be-  
side the window-bars,  
Then seem'd to go right up to heaven  
and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I  
trust it is. I know  
The blessed music went that way my  
soul will have to go.  
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I  
go to-day;  
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when  
I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and  
tell him not to fret;  
There's many a worthier than I, would  
make him happy yet.  
If I had lived — I cannot tell — I might  
have been his wife;  
But all these things have ceased to be,  
with my desire of life.

O, look! the sun begins to rise, the  
heavens are in a glow;

He shines upon a hundred fields, and  
 all of them I know. <sup>50</sup>  
 And there I move no longer now, and  
 there his light may shine—  
 Wild flowers in the valley for other  
 hands than mine.

O, sweet and strange it seems to me,  
 that ere this day is done  
 The voice, that now is speaking, may  
 be beyond the sun—  
 For ever and for ever with those just  
 souls and true—  
 And what is life, that we should moan ?  
 why make we such ado ?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed  
 home—  
 And there to wait a little while till  
 you and Effie come—

To lie within the light of God, as I lie  
 upon your breast—  
 And the wicked cease from troubling,  
 and the weary are at rest. <sup>60</sup>

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed  
 toward the land,  
 'This mounting wave will roll us  
 shoreward soon.'

In the afternoon they came unto a land  
 In which it seemed always afternoon.  
 All round the coast the languid air did  
 swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary  
 dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the  
 moon ;



'I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed'

And, like a downward smoke, the  
slender stream  
Along the cliff to fall and pause and  
fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a down-  
ward smoke, <sup>10</sup>  
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn,  
did go;  
And some thro' wavering lights and  
shadows broke,  
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam be-  
low.  
They saw the gleaming river seaward  
flow  
From the inner land; far off, three  
mountain-tops,  
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
Stood sunset-flush'd; and, dew'd with  
showery drops,  
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the  
woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low  
adown  
In the red West; thro' mountain clefts  
the dale <sup>20</sup>  
Was seen far inland, and the yellow  
down  
Border'd with palm, and many a wind-  
ing vale  
And meadow, set with slender galin-  
gale;  
A land where all things always seem'd  
the same!  
And round about the keel with faces  
pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eat-  
ers came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted  
stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof  
they gave  
To each, but whoso did receive of them  
And taste, to him the gushing of the  
wave <sup>31</sup>  
Far far away did seem to mourn and  
rave  
On alien shores; and if his fellow  
spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the  
grave;  
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all  
awake,

And music in his ears his beating heart  
did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow  
sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the  
shore;  
And sweet it was to dream of Father-  
land,  
Of child, and wife, and slave; but  
evermore <sup>40</sup>  
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the  
oar,  
Weary the wandering fields of barren  
foam.  
Then some one said, 'We will return  
no more;'  
And all at once they sang, 'Our island  
home  
Is far beyond the wave; we will no  
longer roam.'

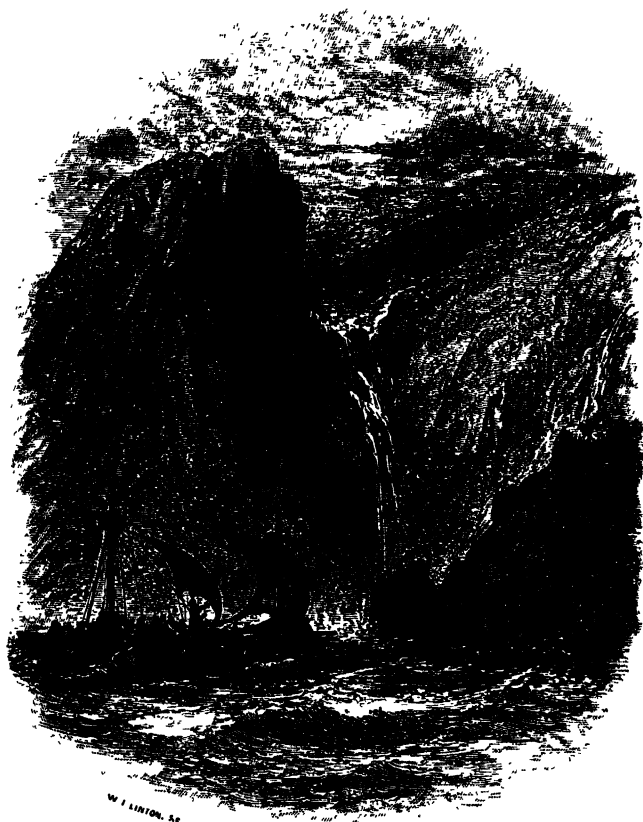
#### CHORIC SONG

##### I

THERE is sweet music here that softer  
falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the  
grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between  
walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming  
pass;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down  
from the blissful skies.  
Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved  
flowers weep, <sup>10</sup>  
And from the craggy ledge the poppy  
hangs in sleep.

##### II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heavi-  
ness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp dis-  
tress,  
While all things else have rest from  
weariness?  
All things have rest: why should we  
toil alone,  
We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual-mean,



'O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more'

Still from one sorrow to another  
thrown ;

Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings, <sup>20</sup>  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy  
balm ;

Nor harken what the inner spirits sing,  
'There is no joy but calm !' —  
Why should we only toil, the roof and  
crown of things ?

### III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,  
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the  
bud

With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no  
care,

Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air. <sup>31</sup>

Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-  
mellow,

Drops in a silent autumn night.  
All its allotted length of days  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath  
no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 40  
 Death is the end of life; ah, why  
 Should life all labor be?  
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward  
 fast,  
 And in a little while our lips are  
 dumb.  
 Let us alone. What is it that will  
 last?  
 All things are taken from us, and be-  
 come  
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful  
 past.  
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we  
 have  
 To war with evil? Is there any  
 peace  
 In ever climbing up the climbing  
 wave? 50  
 All things have, rest, and ripen toward  
 the grave  
 In silence—ripen, fall, and cease:  
 Give us long rest or death, dark death,  
 or dreamful ease.

## V

How sweet it were, hearing the down-  
 ward stream,  
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
 Falling asleep in a half-dream!  
 To dream and dream, like yonder  
 amber light,  
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush  
 on the height;  
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech;  
 Eating the Lotos day by day, 60  
 To watch the crisping ripples on the  
 beach,  
 And tender curving lines of creamy  
 spray;  
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
 To the influence of mild-minded mel-  
 ancholy;  
 To muse and brood and live again in  
 memory,  
 With those old faces of our infancy  
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in  
 an urn of brass!

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded  
 lives,

And dear the last embraces of our  
 wives  
 And their warm tears; but all hath 70  
 suffer'd change;  
 For surely now our household hearths  
 are cold,  
 Our sons inherit us, our looks are  
 strange,  
 And we should come like ghosts to  
 trouble joy.  
 Or else the island princes over-bold  
 Have eat our substance, and the min-  
 strel sings  
 Before them of the ten years' war in  
 Troy,  
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten  
 things.  
 Is there confusion in the little isle?  
 Let what is broken so remain. 80  
 The Gods are hard to reconcile;  
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
 There is confusion worse than death,  
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
 Long labor unto aged breath,  
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many  
 wars  
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on  
 the pilot-stars.

## VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and  
 moly,  
 How sweet—while warm airs lull us,  
 blowing lowly—  
 With half-dropt eyelid still, 90  
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
 To watch the long bright river draw-  
 ing slowly  
 His waters from the purple hill—  
 To hear the dewy echoes calling  
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-  
 twined vine—  
 To watch the emerald-color'd water  
 falling  
 Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath  
 divine!  
 Only to hear and see the far-off spar-  
 kling brine,  
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out  
 beneath the pine.

## VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren  
 peak, 100  
 The Lotos blows by every winding  
 creek;

All day the wind breathes low with  
 mellow tone;  
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley  
 lone  
 Round and round the spicy downs the  
 yellow Lotos-dust is blown.  
 We have had enough of action, and of  
 motion we,  
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,  
 when the surge was seething  
 free,  
 Where the wallowing monster spouted  
 his foam-fountains in the sea.  
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it with  
 an equal mind,  
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and  
 lie reclined  
 On the hills like Gods together, care-  
 less of mankind. 110  
 For they lie beside their nectar, and  
 the bolts are hurl'd  
 Far below them in the valleys, and  
 the clouds are lightly curl'd  
 Round their golden houses, girdled  
 with the gleaming world;  
 Where they smile in secret, looking  
 over wasted lands,  
 Blight and famine, plague and earth-  
 quake, roaring deeps and fiery  
 sands,  
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns,  
 and sinking ships, and praying  
 hands.  
 But they smile, they find a music cen-  
 tred in a doleful song  
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an  
 ancient tale of wrong,  
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the  
 words are strong;  
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men  
 that cleave the soil, 120  
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest  
 with enduring toil,  
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat,  
 and wine and oil;  
 Till they perish and they suffer—  
 some, 'tis whisper'd—down in  
 hell  
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Ely-  
 sian valleys dwell,  
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of  
 asphodel.  
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet  
 than toil, the shore  
 Than labor in the deep mid-ocean,  
 wind and wave and oar;

O rest ye, brother mariners, we will  
 not wander more.

### A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their  
 shade,  
 'The Legend of Good Women,' long  
 ago

Sung by the morning star of song,  
 who made  
 His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose  
 sweet breath

Preluded those melodious bursts that  
 fill

The spacious times of great Eliza  
 beth

With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of  
 his art

Held me above the subject, as strong  
 gales 13

Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho'  
 my heart,  
 Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears.  
 In every land

I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
 Beauty and anguish walking hand in  
 hand

The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient  
 song

Peopled the hollow dark, like burn-  
 ing stars,

And I heard sounds of insult, shame  
 and wrong,

And trumpets blown for wars; 21

And clattering flints batter'd with  
 clanging hoofs;

And I saw crowds in column'd sanc-  
 tuaries,

And forms that pass'd at windows and  
 on roofs

Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold, heroes  
 tall

Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the  
wall,  
Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with  
heated blasts  
That run before the fluttering  
tongues of fire;  
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails<sup>30</sup>  
and masts,  
And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in bra-  
zen plates,  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water,  
divers woes,  
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron  
grates,  
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as,  
when to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the self-  
same way,  
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level  
sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray.<sup>40</sup>

I started once, or seem'd to start in  
pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove  
to speak.  
As when a great thought strikes along  
the brain  
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew  
down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd  
town;  
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-laps-  
ing thought  
Stream'd onward, lost their edges,  
and did creep<sup>50</sup>  
Roll'd on each other, rounded,  
smooth'd, and brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd  
far  
In an old wood; fresh-wash'd in  
coolest dew

The maiden splendors of the morning  
star  
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and  
lean  
Upon the dusky brushwood under-  
neath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged  
with clearest green,  
New from its silken sheath.<sup>60</sup>

The dim red Morn had died, her jour-  
ney done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the  
twilight plain,  
Half-fallen across the threshold of the  
sun,  
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead  
air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of  
rill;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepul-  
chre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jas-  
mine turn'd  
Their humid arms festooning tree to  
tree,<sup>70</sup>  
And at the root thro' lush green grasses  
burn'd  
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves,  
I knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid  
dawn  
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks  
drench'd in dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the  
green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul and  
frame  
The times when I remember to have  
been  
Joyful and free from blame.<sup>80</sup>

And from within me a clear under-  
tone  
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that un-  
blissful clime,

'Pass freely thro'; the wood is all  
thine own  
Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Still than chisell'd marble, stand-  
ing there;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with  
surprise

Froze my swift speech; she turn-  
ing on my face <sup>90</sup>  
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place :

'I had great beauty; ask thou not my  
name :

No one can be more wise than destiny.  
Many drew swords and died. Where-  
e'er I came  
I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fairfield  
Myself for such a face had boldly  
died,'

I answer'd free; and turning I ap-  
peal'd  
To one that stood beside. <sup>100</sup>

But she, with sick and scornful looks  
averse,

To her full height her stately stature  
draws;

'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted  
with a curse :

This woman was the cause.



'Dislodging pinnacle and parapet'



'I was cut off from hope in that sad  
place  
Which men call'd Aulis in those iron  
years:

My father held his hand upon his  
face;

I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was  
thick with sighs

As in a dream. Dimly I could de-  
sery <sup>110</sup>

The stern black-bearded kings with  
wolfish eyes,

Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flicker'd as they lay  
afloat;

The crowds, the temples, waver'd,  
and the shore;

The bright death quiver'd at the vic-  
tim's throat—

Touch'd — and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward  
brow:

'I would the white cold heavy-  
plunging foam,

Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me  
deep below,

Then when I left my home.' <sup>120</sup>

Her slow full words sank thro' the  
silence drear,

As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping  
sea:

Sudden I heard a voice that cried,  
'Come here,

That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery  
rise,

One sitting on a crimson scarf un-  
roll'd;

A queen, with swarthy cheeks and  
bold black eyes,

Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile,  
began:

'I govern'd men by change, and so  
I sway'd <sup>130</sup>

All moods. 'Tis long since I have  
seen a man.

Once, like the moon, I made

'The ever-shifting currents of the  
blood

According to my humor ebb and  
flow.

I have no men to govern in this wood:  
That makes my only woe.

'Nay — yet it chafes me that I could  
not bend

One will; nor tame and tutor with  
mine eye

That dull cold-blooded Caesar. Pry-  
thee, friend,

Where is Mark Antony? <sup>140</sup>

'The man, my lover, with whom I  
rode sublime

On Fortune's neck; we sat as God  
by God:

The Nilus would have risen before  
his time

And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep,  
and lit

Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus.  
O, my life

In Egypt! O, the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife,

'And the wild kiss, when fresh from  
war's alarms,

My Hercules, my Roman Antony, <sup>150</sup>  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my

arms,

Contented there to die!

'And there he died: and when I heard  
my name

Sigh'd forth with life I would not  
brook my fear

Of the other; with a worm I balk'd  
his fame.

What else was left? look here! —

With that she tore her robe apart, and  
half

The polish'd argent of her breast to  
sight

Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with  
a laugh,

Showing the aspick's bite. — <sup>160</sup>

'I died a Queen. The Roman soldier  
found



'Kneeling, with one arm about her king,  
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath'

Me lying dead, my crown about my  
brows,  
A name for ever !—lying robed and  
crown'd,  
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest  
range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down  
and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all  
change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for  
delight;  
Because with sudden motion from  
the ground <sup>170</sup>  
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd  
with light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his  
keenest darts;

As once they drew into two burn-  
ing rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty  
hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I  
heard  
A noise of some one coming thro'  
the lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested  
bird  
That claps his wings at dawn : &c

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late  
and soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro'  
the dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with  
beams divine;

All night the splinter'd crags that  
wall the dell  
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sun-  
shine laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro'  
the door 190  
Hearing the holy organ rolling  
waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd  
and tied  
To where he stands, — so stood I,  
when that flow  
Of music left the lips of her that  
died  
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gilead-  
ite,  
A maiden pure ; as when she went  
along  
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with wel-  
come light,  
With timbrel and with song. 200

My words leapt forth : ' Heaven heads  
the count of crimes  
With that wild oath.' She render'd  
answer high :  
' Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand  
times  
I would be born and die.

' Single I grew, like some green plant,  
whose root  
Creeps to the garden water-pipes  
beneath,  
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower  
to fruit  
Changed, I was ripe for death.

' My God, my land, my father — these  
did move  
Me from my bliss of life that Nature  
gave, 210  
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord  
of love  
Down to a silent grave.

' And I went mourning, " No fair He-  
brew boy  
Shall smile away my maiden blame  
among

The Hebrew mothers " — emptied of  
all joy,  
Leaving the dance and song,

' Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal  
bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that  
glow  
Beneath the battled tower. 220

' The light white cloud swam over us.  
Anon  
We heard the lion roaring from his  
den ;  
We saw the large white stars rise one  
by one,  
Or, from the darken'd glen,

' Saw God divide the night with flying  
flame,  
And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief  
became  
A solemn scorn of ills.

' When the next moon was roll'd into  
the sky,  
Strength came to me that equal'd  
my desire. 230  
How beautiful a thing it was to  
die  
For God and for my sire !

' It comforts me in this one thought  
to dwell,  
That I subdued me to my father's  
will ;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I  
fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still.

' Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from  
Aroer  
On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her  
face  
Glow'd, as I look'd at her. 240

She lock'd her lips ; she left me where  
I stood :  
' Glory to God,' she sang, and past  
afar,  
Thridding the sombre boskage of the  
wood,  
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively;  
 As one that from a casement leans  
 his head,  
 When midnight bells cease ringing  
 suddenly,  
 And the old year is dead.

'Alas! alas!' a low voice, full of care,  
 Murmur'd beside me: 'Turn and  
 look on me; 250  
 I am that Rosamond, whom men call  
 fair,  
 If what I was I be.

'Would I had been some maiden coarse  
 and poor!  
 O me, that I should ever see the  
 light!

Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor  
 Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope  
 and trust;

To whom the Egyptian: 'O, you  
 tamely died!

You should have clung to Fulvia's  
 waist, and thrust  
 The dagger thro' her side.' 260

With that sharp sound the white  
 dawn's creeping beams,  
 Stolen to my brain, dissolved the  
 mystery

Of folded sleep. The captain of my  
 dreams  
 Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the  
 dark

Ere I saw her who clasp'd in her  
 last trance

Her murder'd father's head, or Joan  
 of Arc,

A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can van-  
 quish Death,

Who kneeling, with one arm about  
 her king, 270

Drew forth the poison with her balmy  
 breath,

Sweet as new buds in spring.

No memory labors longer from the deep  
 Gold-mines of thought to lift the  
 hidden ore

That glimpses, moving up, than I  
 from sleep  
 To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With  
 what dull pain

Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to  
 strike

Into that wondrous track of dreams  
 again!

But no two dreams are like. 280

As when a soul laments, which hath  
 been blest,

Desiring what is mingled with past  
 years,

In yearnings that can never be express'd  
 By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with  
 choicest art,

Failing to give the bitter of the  
 sweet,

Wither beneath the palate, and the  
 heart

Faints, faded by its heat.

### THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something  
 well:

While all the neighbors shoot thee  
 round,

I keep smooth plats of fruitful  
 ground,

Where thou mayst warble, eat, and  
 dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
 Are thine; the range of lawn and  
 park;

The unnetted black-hearts ripen  
 dark,

All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,

Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
 With that gold dagger of thy bill

To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,  
 Cold February loved, is dry;

Plenty corrupts the melody

That made thee famous once when  
 young;



'Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow'

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
Now thy flute-notes are changed to  
coarse,  
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
As when a hawkers hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing  
While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are  
new,  
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

#### THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily  
sighing;

Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly and speak low,  
For the old year lies a-dying.  
Old year, you must not die;  
You came to us so readily,  
You lived with us so steadily,  
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still, he doth not move;  
He will not see the dawn of day.  
He hath no other life above.  
He gave me a friend, and a true true-  
love,  
And the New-year will take 'em away.  
Old year, you must not go;  
So long as you have been with  
us,  
Such joy as you have seen with us,  
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;  
 A jollier year we shall not see.  
 But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
 And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
 He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;  
 We did so laugh and cry with you,  
 I've half a mind to die with you,  
 Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
 But all his merry quips are o'er.  
 To see him die, across the waste  
 His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
 But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.  
 The night is starry and cold, my  
 friend,  
 And the New-year blithe and bold,  
 my friend,  
 Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow  
 I heard just now the crowing cock.  
 The shadows flicker to and fro ;  
 The cricket chirps ; the light burns  
 low ;

'T is nearly twelve o'clock.  
 Shake hands, before you die.  
 Old year, we'll dearly rue for  
 you.  
 What is it we can do for you ?  
 Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
 Alack ! our friend is gone.  
 Close up his eyes ; tie up his chin ;  
 Step from the corpse, and let him in  
 That standeth there alone,  
 And waiteth at the door.  
 There's a new foot on the floor,  
 my friend,  
 And a new face at the door, my  
 friend,  
 A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

[James Spedding]

THE wind that beats the mountain  
 blows  
 More softly round the open wold,  
 And gently comes the world to those  
 That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
 Or else I had not dared to flow  
 In these words toward you, and invade  
 Even with a verse your holy woe.

'T is strange that those we lean on most,  
 Those in whose laps our limbs are  
 nursed,  
 Fall into shadow, soonest lost ;  
 Those we love first are taken first

God gives us love. Something to love  
 He lends us ; but, when love is  
 grown  
 To ripeness, that on which it throve  
 Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !  
 In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;  
 Once thro' mine own doors Death did  
 pass ;  
 One went who never hath return'd.

He will not smile — not speak to me  
 Once more. Two years his chair  
 is seen  
 Empty before us. That was he  
 Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star  
 Rose with you thro' a little arc  
 Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
 Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother ; his mute dust  
 I honor and his living worth ;  
 A man more pure and bold and just  
 Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh  
 Since that dear soul hath fallen  
 asleep.  
 Great Nature is more wise than I ;  
 I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
 Drawn from the spirit thro' the  
 brain,  
 I will not even preach to you,  
 'Weep, weeping dulls the inward  
 pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.  
 She loveth her own anguish deep  
 More than much pleasure. Let her will  
 Be done — to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, 'God's ordinance  
Of death is blown in every wind ;'  
For that is not a common chance  
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
In all our hearts, as mournful  
light  
That broods above the fallen sun,  
And dwells in heaven half the  
night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near  
Cast down her eyes, and in her  
throat  
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
How *should* I soothe you any way,  
Who miss the brother of your youth ?  
Yet something I did wish to say ;

For he too was a friend to me.  
Both are my friends, and my true  
breast  
Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be  
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would  
make  
Grief more. 'T were better I  
should cease  
Although myself could almost take  
The place of him that sleeps in  
peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace ;  
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons in-  
crease,  
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
Nothing comes to thee new or  
strange.

Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of  
change.

#### ON A MOURNER

##### I

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
Imitates God, and turns her face

To every land beneath the skies,  
Counts nothing that she meets with  
base,  
But lives and loves in every place ;

##### II

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,  
And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
The swamp, where humm'd the  
dropping snipe,  
With moss and braided marish-pipe ;

##### III

And on thy heart a finger lays,  
Saying, 'Beat quicker, for the time  
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways  
Are pleasant, and the beech and  
lime  
Put forth and feel a gladder clime.'

##### IV

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
Going before to some far shrine,  
Teach that sick heart the stronger  
choice,  
Till all thy life one way incline  
With one wide Will that closes thine.

##### V

And when the zoning eve has died  
Where yon dark valleys wind for-  
lorn,  
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and  
bride,  
From out the borders of the morn,  
With that fair child betwixt them  
born.

##### VI

And when no mortal motion jars  
The blackness round the tombing  
sod,  
Thro' silence and the trembling stars  
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have  
trod,  
And Virtue, like a household god

##### VII

Promising empire ; such as those  
Once heard at dead of night to  
greet  
Troy's wandering prince, so that he  
rose  
With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

'YOU ASK ME, WHY, THO' ILL  
AT EASE'

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
Within this region I subside,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
The land, where girt with friends or  
foes  
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom slowly broadens  
down  
From precedent to precedent ;

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But, by degrees to fullness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive  
thought  
Hath time and space to work and  
spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute,

Tho' power should make from land to  
land  
The name of Britain trebly great —  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should fill and choke with golden  
sand —

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,  
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer  
sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

'OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON  
THE HEIGHTS'

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet ;  
Above her shook the starry lights ;  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,

But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and  
field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men reveal'd  
The fullness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, Godlike, grasps the triple forks,  
And, king-like, wears the crown.

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
Make bright our days and light our  
dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes !

'LOVE THOU THY LAND, WITH  
LOVE FAR-BROUGHT'

Love thou thy land, with love far-  
brought  
From out the storied past, and used  
Within the present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power of  
thought ;

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
For English natures, freemen,  
friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings  
The herd, wild hearts and feeble  
wings  
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness, neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for  
day,  
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the  
winds ;



But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
Before her to whatever sky  
Bear seed of men and growth of  
minds. 20

Watch what main-currents draw the  
years;  
Cut Prejudice against the grain.  
But gentle words are always gain;  
Regard the weakness of thy peers.

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
Of pension, neither count on praise—  
It grows to guerdon after-days.  
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch;

Not clinging to some ancient saw,  
Not master'd by some modern  
term, 30  
Not swift nor slow to change, but  
firm;

And in its season bring the law,

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
With Life that, working strongly,  
binds—

Set in all lights by many minds,  
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
And moist and dry, devising long,  
Thro' many agents making strong,  
Matures the individual form. 40

Meet is it changes should control  
Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
We all are changed by still degrees,  
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be  
free

To ingroove itself with that which  
flies,

And work, a joint of state, that  
plies

Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying hard to shape in act;  
For all the past of Time reveals 50  
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Even now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom—  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
Completion in a painful school;  
Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
New Majesties of mighty States— 60

The warders of the growing hour,  
But vague in vapor, hard to mark;  
And round them sea and air are  
dark  
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
Is bodied forth the second whole.  
Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires, 69  
And heap their ashes on the head;  
To shame the boast so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires.

O, yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall  
close,  
That Principles are rain'd in blood; 80

Not yet the wise of heart would  
cease  
To hold his hope thro' shame and  
guilt,  
But with his hand against the  
hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like  
Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
Would serve his kind in deed and  
word,  
Certain, if knowledge bring the  
sword,  
That knowledge takes the sword  
away—

Would love the gleams of good that  
broke  
From either side, nor veil his eyes; 90  
And if some dreadful need should  
rise  
Would strike, and firmly, and one  
stroke.

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
 As we bear blossom of the dead;  
 Earn well the thrifty months, nor  
 wed  
 Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

# ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

O THOU that sendest out the man  
 To rule by land and sea,  
 Strong mother of a Lion-line,  
 Be proud of those strong sons of thine  
 Who wrench'd their rights from  
 thee !

What wonder if in noble heat  
 Those men thine arms withstood,  
 Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,  
 And in thy spirit with thee fought—  
 Who sprang from English blood !

But thou rejoice with liberal joy,  
 Lift up thy rocky face,

And shatter, when the storms are  
 black,  
 In many a streaming torrent back,  
 The seas that shock thy base !

Whatever harmonies of law  
 The growing world assume,  
 Thy work is thine — the single note  
 From that deep chord which Hamp-  
 den smote  
 Will vibrate to the doom.

## THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
 Her rags scarce held together ;  
 There strode a stranger to the door,  
 And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
 He utter'd rhyme and reason :  
 'Here, take the goose, and keep you  
 warm,  
 It is a stormy season.'



'Quoth she, "The devil take the goose,  
 And God forget the stranger"'

She caught the white goose by the  
leg,

A goose — 't was no great matter.  
The goose let fall a golden egg  
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the  
pelf,

And ran to tell her neighbors,  
And bless'd herself, and cursed her-  
self,

And rested from her labors ;

And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able-bodied,  
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,  
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
She felt her heart grow prouder ;  
But ah ! the more the white goose  
laid  
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there,  
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle ;  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

'A quinsy choke thy cursed note !'  
Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
'Go, take the goose, and wring her  
throat,  
I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the  
cat,

Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew  
that,

And fill'd the house with clamor.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They flounder'd all together,  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.

He took the goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd words of scorning :  
'So keep you cold, or keep you  
warm,  
It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and  
plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew  
up,

And a whirlwind clear'd the larder ;

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, 'The devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger !'



“An arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite”

## ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS

### THE EPIC

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-  
eve, —  
The game of forfeits done — the girls  
all kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and past  
away —  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard  
Hall,

The host, and I sat round the wassail  
bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd; and there we  
held a talk,  
How all the old honor had from Christ-  
mas gone,  
Or gone or dwindled down to some odd  
games  
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired  
out

With cutting eights that day upon the  
 pond,<sup>10</sup>  
 Where, three times slipping from the  
 outer edge,  
 I bump'd the ice into three several  
 stars,  
 Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard  
 The parson taking wide and wider  
 sweeps,  
 Now harping on the church-commis-  
 sioners,  
 Now hawking at geology and schism;  
 Until I woke, and found him settled  
 down  
 Upon the general decay of faith  
 Right thro' the world: 'at home was  
 little left,  
 And none abroad; there was no anchor,  
 none,<sup>20</sup>  
 To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt  
 his hand  
 On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold  
 by him.'  
 'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the was-  
 sail-bowl.'  
 'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your  
 gift that way  
 At college; but another which you  
 had —  
 I mean of verse (for so we held it then),  
 What came of that?' 'You know,'  
 said Frank, 'he burnt  
 His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve  
 books' —  
 And then to me demanding why: 'O,  
 sir,  
 He thought that nothing new was said,  
 or else<sup>30</sup>  
 Something so said 'twas nothing —  
 that a truth  
 Looks freshest in the fashion of the  
 day;  
 God knows; he has a mint of reasons;  
 ask.  
 It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay,  
 nay,' said Hall,  
 'Why take the style of those heroic  
 times?  
 For nature brings not back the masto-  
 don,  
 Nor we those times; and why should  
 any man  
 Remodel models? these twelve books  
 of mine  
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-  
 worth,

Mere chaff and draff, much better  
 burnt.' 'But I,'<sup>40</sup>  
 Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from  
 this hearth,  
 And have it; keep a thing, its use will  
 come.  
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'  
 He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a  
 horse  
 That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd  
 my ears;  
 For I remember'd Everard's college  
 fame  
 When we were Freshmen. Then at  
 my request  
 He brought it; and the poet, little  
 urged,  
 But with some prelude of disparage-  
 ment,  
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and  
 aes,<sup>50</sup>  
 Deep-chested music, and to this re-  
 sult.

### MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle  
 roll'd  
 Among the mountains by the winter  
 sea,  
 Until King Arthur's table, man by  
 man,  
 Had fallen in Lyonness about their lord,  
 King Arthur; then, because his wound  
 was deep,  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
 A broken chancel with a broken  
 cross,<sup>60</sup>  
 That stood on a dark strait of barren  
 land.  
 On one side lay the ocean, and on one  
 Lay a great water, and the moon was  
 full.  
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
 vere:  
 'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
 The goodliest fellowship of famous  
 knights  
 Whereof this world holds record. Such  
 a sleep  
 They sleep — the men I loved. I think  
 that we  
 Shall never more, at any future time,

Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
 deeds,  
 Walking about the gardens and the <sup>70</sup>  
 halls  
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
 I perish by this people which I  
 made, —  
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
 again  
 To rule once more — but let what will  
 be he,  
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
 That without help I cannot last till  
 morn.  
 Thou therefore take my brand Excali-  
 bur,  
 Which was my pride; for thou re-  
 memberest how  
 In those old days, one summer noon,  
 an arm <sup>80</sup>  
 Rose up from out the bosom of the  
 lake,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
 derful,  
 Holding the sword — and how I row'd  
 across  
 And took it, and have worn it, like a  
 king;  
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
 In aftertime, this also shall be known.  
 But now delay not; take Excalibur,  
 And fling him far into the middle  
 mere;  
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly  
 bring me word.  
 To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-  
 vere : <sup>90</sup>  
 'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee  
 thus,  
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the  
 helm.  
 A little thing may harm a wounded  
 man.  
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring  
 thee word.'  
 So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he  
 stept  
 And in the moon athwart the place of  
 tombs,  
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
 men,  
 Old knights, and over them the sea-  
 wind sang  
 Shril, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
 stepping down <sup>100</sup>

By zigzag pates and juts of pointed  
 rock,  
 Came on the shining levels of the  
 lake.  
 There drew he forth the brand Ex-  
 calbur,  
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter  
 moon,  
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
 ran forth  
 And sparkled keen with frost against  
 the hilt;  
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond  
 sparks,  
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-  
 work  
 Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so  
 long  
 That both his eyes were dazzled, as he  
 stood, <sup>110</sup>  
 This way and that dividing the swift  
 mind,  
 In act to throw; but at the last it  
 seem'd  
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
 There in the many-knotted water-flags,  
 That whistled stiff and dry about the  
 marge.  
 So strode he back slow to the wounded  
 king.  
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
 Bedivere:  
 'Hast thou perform'd my mission  
 which I gave?  
 What is it thou hast seen, or what  
 hast heard?'  
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
 vere : <sup>120</sup>  
 'I heard the ripple washing in the  
 reeds,  
 And the wild water lapping on the  
 crag.'  
 To whom replied King Arthur, faint  
 and pale:  
 'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and  
 thy name,  
 Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
 Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;  
 For surer sign had follow'd, either  
 hand,  
 Or voice, or else a motion of the  
 mere.  
 This is a shameful thing for men to  
 lie.  
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go  
 again <sup>130</sup>

As thou art lief and dear, and do the  
thing  
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring  
me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second  
time

Across the ridge, and paced beside the  
mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
thought;

But when he saw the wonder of the  
hilt,

How curiously and strangely chased,  
he smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand  
away,

Surely a precious thing, one worthy  
note, <sup>140</sup>

Should thus be lost forever from the  
earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes  
of many men.

What good should follow this, if this  
were done?

What harm, undone? deep harm to  
disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king  
demand

An act unprofitable, against himself?

The king is sick, and knows not what  
he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty  
breath <sup>150</sup>

And rumors of a doubt? but were this  
kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of  
mighty kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of  
arms,

Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Ex-  
calibur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the  
lake;

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in  
the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."

So might some old man speak in the  
aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence;  
But now much honor and much fame  
were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit, <sup>160</sup>

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the  
wounded king.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing  
heavily:

'What is it thou hast seen, or what  
hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere:

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the  
reefs.'

To whom replied King Arthur,  
much in wrath:

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is  
me! <sup>171</sup>

Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye

That bow'd the will. I see thee what  
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my  
knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the pre-  
cious hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the  
eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get  
thee hence; <sup>181</sup>

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my  
hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere,  
and ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd  
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it.  
The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of  
the moon,

And flashing round and round, and  
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern  
morn, <sup>190</sup>

Seen where the moving isles of winter  
shock

By night, with noises of the northern  
sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an  
arm

By night, with noises of the northern  
sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an  
arm

Cloth'd in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.

And lightly went the other to the king.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done. <sup>200</sup>

Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, <sup>210</sup>

That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:

'My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I fear My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes <sup>220</sup>

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed

When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the king,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear 'Quick, quick! <sup>230</sup>

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills. He heard the deep behind him, and a cry

Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves And barren chasms, and all to left and right

The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang <sup>240</sup>

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—

And on a sudden, lo! the level lake, And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,

Beneath them; and descending they were ware

That all the decks were dense with stately forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these

Three queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars, <sup>250</sup>

And, as it were one voice, an agony Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills

All night in a waste land, where no one comes,

Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'



And to the barge they came. There  
 those three queens  
 Put forth their hands, and took the  
 king, and wept.  
 But she that rose the tallest of them all  
 And fairest laid his head upon her lap,  
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
 chafed his hands, <sup>260</sup>  
 And call'd him by his name, com-  
 plaining loud,  
 And dropping bitter tears against his  
 brow  
 Striped with dark blood; for all his  
 face was white  
 And colorless, and like the wither'd  
 moon  
 Smote by the fresh beam of the spring-  
 ing east;  
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd  
 with drops  
 Of onset; and the light and lustrous  
 curls—  
 That made his forehead like a rising  
 sun  
 High from the dais-throne—were  
 parch'd with dust;  
 Or, clotted into points and hanging  
 loose, <sup>270</sup>  
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
 fringed his lips.  
 So like a shatter'd column lay the  
 king;  
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance  
 in rest,  
 From spur to plume a star of tourna-  
 ment,  
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and  
 charged  
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.  
 Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedi-  
 vere:  
 'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall  
 I go?  
 Where shall I hide my forehead and  
 my eyes?  
 For now I see the true old times are  
 dead, <sup>280</sup>  
 When every morning brought a noble  
 chance,  
 And every chance brought out a noble  
 knight.  
 Such times have been not since the  
 light that led  
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is  
 dissolved

Which was an image of the mighty  
 world;  
 And I, the last, go forth companion-  
 less,  
 And the days darken round me, and  
 the years,  
 Among new men, strange faces, other  
 minds.'  
 And slowly answer'd Arthur from  
 the barge: <sup>290</sup>  
 'The old order changeth, yielding  
 place to new,  
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
 Lest one good custom should corrupt  
 the world.  
 Comfort thyself: what comfort is in  
 me?  
 I have lived my life, and that which  
 I have done  
 May He within himself make pure!  
 but thou,  
 If thou shouldst never see my face  
 again,  
 Pray for my soul. More things are  
 wrought by prayer  
 Than this world dreams of. Where-  
 fore, let thy voice  
 Rise like a fountain for me night and  
 day. <sup>300</sup>  
 For what are men better than sheep or  
 goats  
 That nourish a blind life within the  
 brain,  
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands  
 of prayer  
 Both for themselves and those who  
 call them friend?  
 For so the whole round earth is every  
 way  
 Bound by gold chains about the feet  
 of God.  
 But now farewell. I am going a long  
 way  
 With these thou seest—if indeed I  
 go—  
 For all my mind is clouded with a  
 doubt—  
 To the island-valley of Avilion; <sup>310</sup>  
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any  
 snow,  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it  
 lies  
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with or-  
 chard lawns  
 And bowery hollows crown'd with  
 summer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous  
wound.'

So said he, and the barge-with oar  
and sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-  
breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes  
the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir  
Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the hull<sup>320</sup>  
Look'd one black dot against the verge  
of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light  
that long



'And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood'

Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness,  
 flared and fell ;  
 At which the parson, sent to sleep with  
 sound,  
 And waked with silence, grunted  
 'Good !' but we  
 Sat rapt: it was the tone with which  
 he read —  
 Perhaps some modern touches here and  
 there  
 Redeem'd it from the charge of no-  
 thingness —  
 Or else we loved the man, and prized<sup>330</sup>  
 his work ;  
 I know not ; but we sitting, as I said,  
 The cock crew loud, as at that time of  
 year  
 The lusty bird takes every hour for  
 dawn.  
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man  
 ill-used,  
 'There now — that's nothing !' drew  
 a little back,  
 And drove his heel into the smoulder'd  
 log,  
 That sent a blast of sparkles up the  
 flue.  
 And so to bed, where yet in sleep I  
 seem'd  
 To sail with Arthur under looming  
 shores,  
 Point after point; till on to dawn,<sup>340</sup>  
 when dreams  
 Begin to feel the truth and stir of  
 day,  
 To me, methought, who waited with  
 the crowd,  
 There came a bark that, blowing for-  
 ward, bore  
 King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
 Of stateliest port; and all the people  
 cried,  
 'Arthur is come again: he cannot die.'  
 Then those that stood upon the hills  
 behind  
 Repeated — 'Come again, and thrice  
 as fair ;'  
 And, further inland, voices echoed —  
 'Come  
 With all good things, and war shall be<sup>350</sup>  
 no more.'  
 At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
 That with the sound I woke, and heard  
 indeed  
 The clear church-bells ring in the  
 Christmas morn.

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER

OR, THE PICTURES

This morning is the morning of the  
 day,  
 When I and Eustace from the city  
 went  
 To see the Gardener's daughter; I and  
 he,  
 Brothers in Art; a friendship so com-  
 plete  
 Portion'd in halves between us, that  
 we grew  
 The fable of the city where we dwelt.  
 My Eustace might have sat for Her-  
 cules;  
 So muscular he spread, so broad of  
 breast.  
 He, by some law that holds in love,  
 and draws  
 The greater to the lesser, long desired  
 A certain miracle of symmetry,  
 A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
 Summ'd up and closed in little; — Ju-  
 liet, she  
 So light of foot, so light of spirit — O,  
 she  
 To me myself, for some three careless  
 moons,  
 The summer pilot of an empty heart  
 Unto the shores of nothing! Know  
 you not  
 Such touches are but embassies of  
 Love,  
 To tamper with the feelings, ere he  
 found  
 Empire for life? but Eustace painted  
 her,  
 And said to me, she sitting with us<sup>20</sup>  
 then,  
 'When will you paint like this?' and  
 I replied —  
 My words were half in earnest, half  
 in jest:  
 'T is not your work, but Love's.  
 Love, unperceived,  
 A more ideal artist he than all,  
 Came, drew your pencil from you,  
 made those eyes  
 Darker than darkest pansies, and that  
 hair  
 More black than ashbuds in the front  
 of March.'  
 And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go  
 and see

The Gardener's daughter; trust me,  
after that,  
You scarce can fail to match his mas-<sup>30</sup>  
terpiece.'

And up we rose, and on the spur we  
went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor  
quite

Beyond it, blooms the garden that I  
love.

News from the humming city comes  
to it

In sound of funeral or of marriage  
bells;

And, sitting muffled in dark leaves,  
you hear

The windy clanging of the minster  
clock;

Altho' between it and the garden lies  
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow  
broad stream,

That, stir'd with languid pulses of<sup>40</sup>  
the oar,

Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between  
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-  
udder'd kine,

And all about the large lime feathers  
low —

The lime a summer home of murmur-  
ous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in  
herself,

Grew, seldom seen; not less among us  
lived

Her fame from lip to lip. Who had  
not heard<sup>50</sup>

Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter?  
Where was he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in  
grief,

That, having seen, forgot? The com-  
mon mouth,

So gross to express delight, in praise  
of her

Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the  
world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by  
Love,

Would play with flying forms and  
images,

Yet this is also true, that, long before

I look'd upon her, when I heard her  
name<sup>61</sup>

My heart was like a prophet to my  
heart,

And told me I should love. A crowd  
of hopes,

That sought to sow themselves like  
winged seeds,

Born out of everything I heard and  
saw,

Flutter'd about my senses and my  
soul;

And vague desires, like fitful blasts of  
balm

To one that travels quickly, made the  
air

Of life delicious, and all kinds of  
thought,

That verged upon them, sweeter than  
the dream<sup>70</sup>

Dream'd by a happy man, when the  
dark East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal  
morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory  
folds

For ever in itself the day we went  
To see her. All the land in flowery  
squares,

Beneath a broad and equal-blowing  
wind,

Smelt of the coming summer, as one  
large cloud

Drew downward; but all else of heaven  
was pure

Up to the sun, and May from verge to  
verge,

And May with me from head to heel.  
And now,<sup>80</sup>

As tho' 't were yesterday, as tho' it were  
The hour just flown, that morn with  
all its sound —

For those old Mays had thrice the life  
of these —

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot  
to graze,

And, where the hedge-row cuts the  
pathway, stood,

Leaning his horns into the neighbor  
field

And lowing to his fellows. From the  
woods

Came voices of the well-contented  
doves.

The lark could scarce get out his notes  
for joy,

But shook his song together as he  
 near'd<sup>90</sup>  
 His happy home, the ground. To left  
 and right,  
 The cuckoo told his name to all the  
 hills;  
 The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;  
 The redcap whistled; and the nightin-  
 gale  
 Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of  
 day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said  
 to me:

'Hear how the bushes echo! by my  
 life,

These birds have joyful thoughts.

Think you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song?

Or have they any sense of why they  
 sing?<sup>100</sup>

And would they praise the heavens for  
 what they have?

And I made answer: 'Were there no-  
 thing else

For which to praise the heavens but  
 only love,

That only love were cause enough for  
 praise.'

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read  
 my thought,

And on we went; but ere an hour had  
 pass'd,

We reach'd a meadow slanting to the  
 North,

Down which a well-worn pathway  
 courted us

To one green wicket in a privet  
 hedge.

This, yielding, gave into a grassy  
 walk<sup>110</sup>

Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly  
 pruned;

And one warm gust, full-fed with per-  
 fume, blew

Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.  
 The garden stretches southward. In

the midst  
 A cedar spread his dark-green layers  
 of shade.

The garden-glasses shone, and mo-  
 mently

The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver  
 lights.

'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps  
 the house.'

He nodded, but a moment afterwards

He cried, 'Look! look!' Before he  
 ceased I turn'd,<sup>120</sup>

And, ere a star can wink, beheld her  
 there.

For up the porch there grew an  
 Eastern rose,

That, flowering high, the last night's  
 gale had caught

And blown across the walk. One arm  
 aloft—

Gown'd in pure white that fitted to the  
 shape—

Holding the bush, to fix it back, she  
 stood,

A single stream of all her soft brown  
 hair

Pour'd on one side; the shadow of the  
 flowers

Stole all the golden gloss, and, waver-  
 ing

Lovingly lower, trembled on her  
 waist—<sup>130</sup>

Ah, happy shade!—and still went  
 wavering down,

But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might  
 have danced

The greensward into greener circles,  
 dipt,

And mix'd with shadows of the com-  
 mon ground.

But the full day dwelt on her brows,  
 and sunn'd

Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe  
 bloom,

And doubled his own warmth against  
 her lips,

And on the bounteous wave of such a  
 breast

As never pencil drew. Half light, half  
 shade,

She stood, a sight to make an old man  
 young.<sup>140</sup>

So rapt, we near'd the house; but  
 she, a Rose

In roses, mingled with her fragrant  
 toil,

Nor heard us come, nor from her ten-  
 dance turn'd

Into the world without; till close at  
 hand,

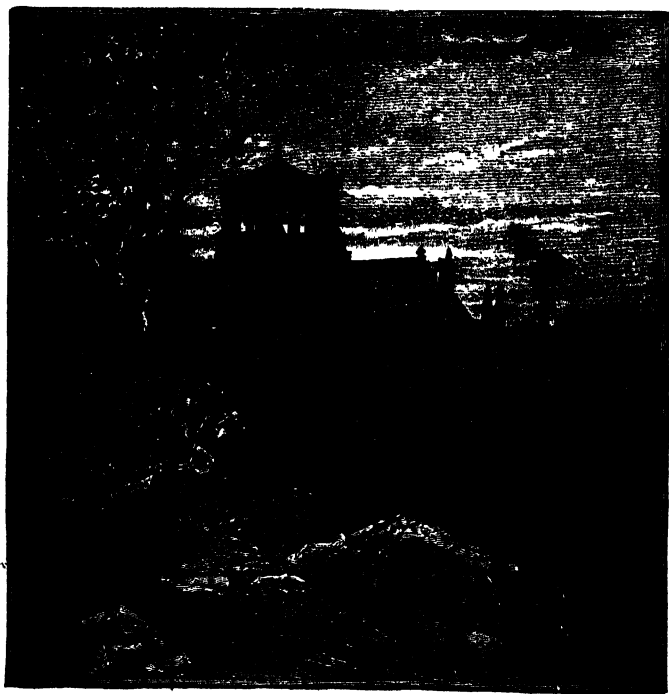
And almost ere I knew mine own in-  
 tent,

This murmur broke the stillness of  
 that air

Which brooded round about her:

'Ah, one rose,





'The gray cathedral towers,  
Across a hazy glimmer of the west'

Felt earth as air beneath me, till I  
reach'd

The wicket-gate, and found her stand-  
ing there.

There sat we down upon a garden  
mound,

Two mutually enfolded; Love, the  
third,

Between us, in the circle of his arms  
Enwound us both; and over many a  
range

Of waning lime the gray cathedral  
towers,

Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
Reveal'd their shining windows.

From them clash'd

The bells; we listen'd; with the time  
we play'd,

We spoke of other things; we coursed  
about

The subject most at heart, more near  
and near,

Like doves about a dovecote, wheel-  
ing round

The central wish, until we settled  
there.

Then, in that time and place, I  
spoke to her,

Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine  
own,

Yet for the pleasure that I took to  
hear,

Requiring at her hand the greatest  
gift,

A woman's heart, the heart of her I  
loved;

And in that time and place she an-  
swer'd me,

And in the compass of three little  
words,

More musical than ever came in one,  
 The silver fragments of a broken  
 voice,  
 Made me most happy, faltering, 'I  
 am thine.' <sup>230</sup>  
 Shall I cease here? Is this enough  
 to say  
 That my desire, like all strongest  
 hopes,  
 By its own energy fulfill'd itself,  
 Merged in completion? Would you  
 learn at full  
 How passion rose thro' circumstantial  
 grades  
 Beyond all grades develop'd? and in-  
 deed  
 I had not staid so long to tell you  
 all,  
 But while I mused came Memory with  
 sad eyes,  
 Holding the folded annals of my  
 youth;  
 And while I mused, Love with knit  
 brows went by, <sup>240</sup>  
 And with a flying finger swept my  
 lips,  
 And spake, 'Be wise: not easily for-  
 given  
 Are those who, setting wide the doors  
 that bar  
 The secret bridal chambers of the  
 heart,  
 Let in the day.' Here, then, my  
 words have end.  
 Yet might I tell of meetings, of  
 farewells—  
 Of that which came between, more  
 sweet than each,  
 In whispers, like the whispers of the  
 leaves  
 That tremble round a nightingale—  
 in sighs  
 Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for ut-  
 terance, <sup>250</sup>  
 Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might  
 I not tell  
 Of difference, reconciliation, pledges  
 given,  
 And vows, where there was never  
 need of vows,  
 And kisses, where the heart on one  
 wild leap  
 Hung tranced from all pulsation, as  
 above  
 The heavens between their fairy  
 fleeces pale

Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with  
 fleeting stars;  
 Or while the balmy glooming, cres-  
 cent-lit,  
 Spread the light haze along the river-  
 shores,  
 And in the hollows; or as once we  
 met <sup>260</sup>  
 Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering  
 rain  
 Night slid down one long stream of  
 sighing wind,  
 And in her bosom bore the baby,  
 Sleep?  
 But this whole hour your eyes have  
 been intent  
 On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for  
 what it holds  
 May not be dwelt on by the common  
 day.  
 This prelude has prepared thee. Raise  
 thy soul,  
 Make thine heart ready with thine  
 eyes; the time  
 Is come to raise the veil.  
 Behold her there,  
 As I beheld her ere she knew my  
 heart, <sup>270</sup>  
 My first, last love; the idol of my  
 youth,  
 The darling of my manhood, and,  
 alas!  
 Now the most blessed memory of  
 mine age.

## DORA

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode  
 William and Dora. William was his  
 son,  
 And she his niece. He often look'd  
 at them,  
 And often thought, 'I'll make them  
 man and wife.'  
 Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
 And yearn'd toward William; but  
 the youth, because  
 He had been always with her in the  
 house,  
 Thought not of Dora.  
 Then there came a day  
 When Allan call'd his son, and said:  
 'My son,  
 I married late, but I would wish to  
 see <sup>280</sup>



My grandchild on my knees before I die;  
 And I have set my heart upon a match.  
 Now therefore look to Dora; she is well  
 To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.  
 She is my brother's daughter; he and I  
 Had once hard words, and parted, and he died  
 In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred  
 His daughter Dora. Take her for your wife;  
 For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,  
 For many years.' But William answer'd short: <sup>20</sup>  
 'I cannot marry Dora; by my life, I will not marry Dora!' Then the old man  
 Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:  
 'You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!  
 But in my time a father's word was law,  
 And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;  
 Consider, William, take a month to think,  
 And let me have an answer to my wish,  
 Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,  
 And never more darken my doors again.' <sup>30</sup>  
 But William answer'd madly, bit his lips,  
 And broke away. The more he look'd at her  
 The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;  
 But Dora bore them meekly. Then before  
 The month was out he left his father's house,  
 And hired himself to work within the fields;  
 And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed  
 A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.  
 Then, when the bells were ringing,  
 Allan call'd

His niece and said: 'My girl, I love you well;  
 But if you speak with him that was my son,  
 Or change a word with her he calls his wife,  
 My home is none of yours. My wil' is law.'  
 And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,  
 'It cannot be; my uncle's mind will change!'  
 And days went on, and there was born a boy  
 To William; then distresses came on him,  
 And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,  
 Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.  
 But Dora stored what little she could save, <sup>50</sup>  
 And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know  
 Who sent it; till at last a fever seized  
 On William, and in harvest time he died.  
 Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
 And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought  
 Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:  
 'I have obey'd my uncle until now, And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me  
 This evil came on William at the first.  
 But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone, <sup>60</sup>  
 And for your sake, the woman that he chose,  
 And for this orphan, I am come to you. You know there has not been for these five years  
 So full a harvest. Let me take the boy,  
 And I will set him in my uncle's eye Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad  
 Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
 And bless him for the sake of him that's gone.'  
 And Dora took the child, and went her way

Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
 That was unsown, where many poppies grew.<sup>70</sup>  
 Far off the farmer came into the field  
 And spied her not, for none of all his men  
 Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;  
 And Dora would have risen and gone to him,  
 But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,  
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.  
 But when the morrow came, she rose and took  
 The child once more, and sat upon the mound;  
 And made a little wreath of all the flowers<sup>80</sup>  
 That grew about, and tied it round his hat  
 To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.  
 Then when the farmer pass'd into the field  
 He spied her, and he left his men at work,  
 And came and said: 'Where were you yesterday?  
 Whose child is that? What are you doing here?'  
 So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
 And answer'd softly, 'This is William's child!'  
 'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not  
 Forbid you, Dora?' Dora said again:  
 'Do with me as you will, but take the child,<sup>90</sup>  
 And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!'  
 And Allan said: 'I see it is a trick  
 Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
 I must be taught my duty, and by you!  
 You knew my word was law, and yet you dared  
 To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;  
 But go you hence, and never see me more.'

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud  
 And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell<sup>100</sup>  
 At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,  
 And the boy's cry came to her from the field  
 More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,  
 Remembering the day when first she came,  
 And all the things that had been. She bow'd down  
 And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,  
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.  
 Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood  
 Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
 Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise<sup>110</sup>  
 To God, that help'd her in her widow-hood.  
 And Dora said: 'My uncle took the boy;  
 But, Mary, let me live and work with you:  
 He says that he will never see me more.'  
 Then answer'd Mary: 'This shall never be,  
 That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself;  
 And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,  
 For he will teach him hardness, and to slight  
 His mother. Therefore thou and I will go,  
 And I will have my boy, and bring him home;<sup>120</sup>  
 And I will beg of him to take thee back.  
 But if he will not take thee back again,  
 Then thou and I will live within one house,  
 And work for William's child, until he grows  
 Of age to help us.'  
 So the women kiss'd  
 Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.



"I have been to blame — to blame. I have kill'd my son.  
I have kill'd him — but I loved him — my dear son!"

The door was off the latch; they  
peep'd, and saw  
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's  
knees,  
Who thrust him in the hollows of his  
arm,  
And clapt him on the hands and on  
the cheeks,  
Like one that loved him; and the lad <sup>130</sup>  
stretch'd out  
And babbled for the golden seal, that  
hung  
From Allan's watch and sparkled by  
the fire.  
Then they came in; but when the boy  
beheld  
His mother, he cried out to come to  
her;  
And Allan set him down, and Mary  
said:

'O father! — if you let me call you  
so —  
I never came a-begging for my-  
self,  
Or William, or this child; but now I  
come  
For Dora; take her back, she loves  
you well. <sup>140</sup>  
O Sir, when William died, he died at  
peace  
With all men; for I ask'd him, and  
he said,  
He could not ever rue his marrying  
me —  
I had been a patient wife; but, Sir,  
he said  
That he was wrong to cross his father  
thus.  
"God bless him!" he said, "and may  
he never know

The troubles I have gone thro'!"

Then he turn'd

His face and pass'd — unhappy that I am!

But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you

Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight <sup>150</sup>

His father's memory; and take Dora back,

And let all this be as it was before.'

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face

By Mary. There was silence in the room;

And all at once the old man burst in sobs:

'I have been to blame—to blame.

I have kill'd my son.

I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.

May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.

Kiss me, my children.'

Then they clung about

The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times. <sup>160</sup>

And all the man was broken with remorse;

And all his love came back a hundred-fold;

And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child

Thinking of William.

So those four abode

Within one house together, and as years

Went forward Mary took another mate;

But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

## AUDLEY COURT

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not a room

For love or money. Let us picnic there

At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow quay,

To Francis, with a basket on his arm,

To Francis just alighted from the boat

And breathing of the sea. 'With all my heart,'

Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' the swarm,

And rounded by the stillness of the beach

To where the bay runs up its latest horn. <sup>10</sup>

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd

The flat red granite; so by many a sweep

Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd

The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro' all

The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,

And cross'd the garden to the garden-er's lodge,

With all its casements bedded, and its walls

And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid

A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound, <sup>20</sup>

Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,

And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,

Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,

Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks

Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,

A flask of cider from his father's vats,

Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat

And talk'd old matters over,—who was dead,

Who married, who was like to be, and how

The races went, and who would rent the hall; <sup>30</sup>

Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was

This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,

The four-field system, and the price of grain;

And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,

And came again together on the king  
With heated faces; till he laugh'd  
aloud,

And, while the blackbird on the pip-  
pin hung

To hear him, clapt his hand in mine  
and sang:

'O, who would fight and march  
and countermarch,

Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field, <sup>40</sup>  
And shovell'd up into some bloody  
trench

Where no one knows? but let me live  
my life.

'O, who would cast and balance at  
a desk,

Perch'd like a crow upon a three-  
legg'd stool,

Till all his juice is dried, and all his  
joints

Are full of chalk? but let me live my  
life.

'Who'd serve the state? for if I  
carved my name

Upon the cliffs that guard my native  
land,

I might as well have traced it in the  
sands:

The sea wastes all; but let me live  
my life. <sup>50</sup>

'O, who would love? I woo'd a  
woman once,

But she was sharper than an eastern  
wind,

And all my heart turn'd from her, as  
a thorn

Turns from the sea; but let me live  
my life.'

He sang his song, and I replied with  
mine.

I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir

Robert's pride,

His books—the more the pity, so I  
said—

Came to the hammer here in March—  
and this—

I set the words, and added names I  
knew: <sup>60</sup>

'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and  
dream of me:

Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is

mine.

'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's  
arm;

Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

'Sleep, breathing health and peace  
upon her breast;

Sleep, breathing love and trust against  
her lip.

I go to-night; I come to-morrow  
morn.

'I go, but I return; I would I  
were <sup>70</sup>

The pilot of the darkness and the  
dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream  
of me.'

So sang we each to either, Francis  
Hale,

The farmer's son, who lived across  
the bay,

My friend; and I, that having where-  
withal,

And in the fallow leisure of my life  
A rolling stone of here and every-

where,

Did what I would. But ere the night  
we rose

And saunter'd home beneath a moon  
that, just

In crescent, dimly rain'd about the  
leaf <sup>80</sup>

Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
The limit of the hills; and as we sank

From rock to rock upon the glooming  
quay,

The town was hush'd beneath us;  
lower down

The bay was oily calm; the harbor-  
buoy,

Sole star of phosphorescence in the  
calm,

With one green sparkle ever and anon  
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at

heart.

### WALKING TO THE MAIL

*John.* I'm glad I walk'd. How  
fresh the meadows look

Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
The whole hillside was redder than a

fox!

Is yon plantation where this byway  
joins

The turnpike?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by?

*James.* The mail? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see?  
No, not the County Member's with  
the vane.

Up higher with the yew-tree by it,  
and half

A score of gables.

*James.* That? Sir Edward Head's.  
But he's abroad; the place is to be  
sold.

*John.* O, his! He was not broken.

*James.* No, sir, he,  
Vext with a morbid devil in his blood  
That veil'd the world with jaundice,  
hid his face

From all men, and commercing with  
himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily  
life—

That keeps us all in order more or  
less—

And sick of home went overseas for  
change.

*John.* And whither?

*James.* Nay, who knows? he's  
here and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with  
him,

As well as with his tenant, Jocky  
Dawes.

*John.* What's that?

*James.* You saw the man — on  
Monday, was it?—

There by the humpback'd willow;  
half stands up

And bristles, half has fallen and made  
a bridge;

And there he caught the younker  
tickling trout—

Caught *in flagrante*—what's the  
Latin word?—

*Delicto*; but his house, for so they say,  
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that  
shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt  
at doors,

And rummaged like a rat; no servant  
stay'd.

The farmer vext packs up his beds  
and chairs,

And all his household stuff; and with  
his boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the  
tilt,

Sets out, and meets a friend who hails  
him, 'What!

You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flit-  
ting,' says the ghost—

For they had pack'd the thing among  
the beds.

'O, well,' says he, 'you flitting with  
us too!—

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home  
again.'

*John.* He left his wife behind; for  
so I heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my  
lady once;  
A woman like a butt, and harsh as  
crabs.

*John.* O, yet but I remember, ten  
years back—

'Tis now at least ten years—and then  
she was—

You could not light upon a sweeter  
thing;

A body slight and round, and like a  
pear

In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a  
skin

As clean and white as privet when it  
flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades,  
and they that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat  
and dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager,  
Out of her sphere. What betwixt

shame and pride,  
New things and old, himself, and her.

she sour'd  
To what she is; a nature never kind!

Like men, like manners; like breeds  
like, they say.

Kind nature is the best; those man-  
ners next

That fit us like a nature second-hand—  
Which are indeed the manners of the  
great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this  
bill that past,

And fear of change at home, that  
drove him hence.

*James.* That was the last drop in  
the cup of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff  
brought

A Chartist pike. You should have  
seen him wince

As from a venomous thing; he  
 thought himself  
 A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a  
 cry  
 Should break his sleep by night, and  
 his nice eyes  
 Should see the raw mechanic's bloody  
 thumbs  
 Sweat on his blazon'd chairs. But,  
 sir, you know  
 That these two parties still divide the  
 world —  
 Of those that want, and those that  
 have; and still <sup>70</sup>  
 The same old sore breaks out from  
 age to age  
 With much the same result. Now I  
 myself,  
 A Tory to the quick, was as a boy  
 Destructive, when I had not what I  
 would.  
 I was at school, — a college in the  
 South.  
 There lived a flayflint near; we stole  
 his fruit,  
 His hens, his eggs; but there was law  
 for us;  
 We paid in person. He had a sow,  
 sir. She,  
 With meditative grunts of much con-  
 tent,  
 Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun  
 and mud. <sup>80</sup>  
 By night we dragg'd her to the college  
 tower  
 From her warm bed, and up the cork-  
 screw stair  
 With hand and rope we haled the  
 groaning sow,  
 And on the leads we kept her till she  
 pigg'd.  
 Large range of prospect had the mother  
 sow,  
 And but for daily loss of one she loved  
 As one by one we took them — but for  
 this —  
 As never sow was higher in this  
 world —  
 Might have been happy; but what  
 lot is pure?  
 We took them all, till she was left  
 alone <sup>90</sup>  
 Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
 And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.  
*John.* They found you out?  
*James.* Not they.

*John.* Well — after all —  
 What know we of the secret of a man?  
 His nerves were wrong. What ails us  
 who are sound,  
 That we should mimic this raw fool  
 the world,  
 Which charts us all in its coarse blacks  
 or whites,  
 As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
 As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows  
 To pity — more from ignorance than  
 will.  
 But put your best foot forward, or I <sup>100</sup>  
 fear  
 That we shall miss the mail; and here  
 it comes  
 With five at top, as quaint a four-in-  
 hand  
 As you shall see, — three pyebalds and  
 a roan.

## EDWIN MORRIS

## OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the  
 lake,  
 My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters  
 of a year,  
 My one oasis in the dust and drouth  
 Of city life! I was a sketcher then.  
 See here, my doing: curves of moun-  
 tain, bridge,  
 Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
 When men knew how to build, upon a  
 rock  
 With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock;  
 And here, new-comers in an ancient  
 hold,  
 New-comers from the Mersey, million-  
 aires, <sup>10</sup>  
 Here lived the Hills — a Tudor-chim-  
 ney'd bulk  
 Of mellow brickwork on an isle of  
 bowers.  
 O me, my pleasant rambles by the  
 lake  
 With Edwin Morris and with Edward  
 Bull  
 The curate — he was fatter than his  
 cure!  
 But Edwin Morris, he that knew the  
 names,  
 Long learned names of agaric, moss,  
 and fern,



' When men knew how to build, upon a rock  
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock '

Who forged a thousand theories of the  
rocks,  
Who taught me how to skate, to row,  
to swim,  
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
His own — I call'd him Crichton, for  
he seem'd<sup>21</sup>  
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger-nail.  
And once I ask'd him of his early  
life,  
And his first passion ; and he answer'd  
me,  
And well his words became him — was  
he not  
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence

Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like he  
spoke :  
' My love for Nature is as old  
as I ;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to  
that,  
And three rich sennights more, my love  
for her.<sup>30</sup>  
My love for Nature and my love for  
her,  
Of different ages, like twin-sisters  
grew,  
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.  
To some full music rose and sank the  
sun,



And some full music seem'd to move  
and change  
With all the varied changes of the  
dark,  
And either twilight and the day be-  
tween;  
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again  
Revolving toward fulfillment, made it  
sweet

To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to  
breathe.' 40

Or this or something like to this he  
spoke.

Then said the fat-faced curate Edward  
Bull:

'I take it, God made the woman for  
the man,

And for the good and increase of the  
world.

A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors, that trims us  
up,

And keeps us tight; but these unreal  
ways

Seem but the theme of writers, and  
indeed

Worn threadbare. Man is made of  
solid stuff.

I say, God made the woman for the  
man, 50

And for the good and increase of the  
world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe  
too low.

But I have sudden touches, and can run  
My faith beyond my practice into his;

Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,

I scarce have other music — yet say on.  
What should one give to light on such  
a dream?'

I ask'd him half-sardonically.

'Give?  
Give all thou art,' he answer'd, and a  
light 60

Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy  
cheek;

'I would have hid her needle in my  
heart,

To save her little finger from a scratch  
No deeper than the skin; my ears  
could hear

Her lightest breath; her least remark  
was worth

The experience of the wise. I went  
and came;

Her voice fled always thro' the sum-  
mer land;

I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy  
days!

The flower of each, those moments  
when we met,

The crown of all, we met to part no  
more.' 70

Were not his words delicious, I a  
beast

To take them as I did? but something  
jarr'd;

Whether he spoke too largely, that  
there seem'd

A touch of something false, some self-  
conceit,

Or over-smoothness; howsoe'er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humor, and I  
said:

'Friend Edwin, do not think your-  
self alone

Of all men happy. Shall not Love to  
me,

As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right  
and left? 80

But you can talk, yours is a kindly  
vein;

I have, I think, — Heaven knows, —  
as much within;

Have, or should have, but for a thought  
or two,

That like a purple beech among the  
greens

Looks out of place. 'Tis from no  
want in her;

It is my shyness, or my self-dis-  
trust,

Or something of a wayward modern  
mind

Dissecting passion. Time will set me  
right.'

So spoke I, knowing not the things  
that were.

Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward  
Bull: 90

'God made the woman for the use  
of man,

And for the good and increase of the  
world,

And I and Edwin laughed; and now  
we paused

About the windings of the marge to  
hear

The soft wind blowing over meadowy  
holms

And alders, garden-isles; and now we  
left

The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
By ripply shallows of the lispig lake,  
Delighted with the freshness and the  
sound.

But when the bracken rusted on  
their crags,

My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by  
him

That was a god, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
The rent-roll Cupid of our rainy isles.

'Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no  
more:

She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous*  
*suit*,

The close, 'Your Letty, only yours;'  
and this

Thrice underscored. The friendly mist  
of morn

Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
My craft aground, and heard with  
beating heart

The sweet-gale rustle round the shelv-  
ing keel;

And out I stept, and up I crept. She  
moved,

Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering  
flowers.

Then low and sweet I whistled thrice;  
and she,

She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore  
faith, I breathed

In some new planet. A silent cousin  
stole

Upon us and departed. 'Leave,' she  
cried,

'O, leave me!' 'Never, dearest, never:  
here

I brave the worst;' and while we stood  
like fools

Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
And poodles yell'd within, and out they  
came,

Trustees and aunts and uncles. 'What,  
with him!

Go,' shrill'd the cotton-spinning  
chorus; 'Him!'

I choked. Again they shriek'd the  
burthen, 'Him!'

Again with hands of wild rejection,  
'Go! —

Girl, get you in!' She went — and in  
one month

They wedded her to sixty thousand  
pounds,

To lands in Kent and messuages in  
York,

And slight Sir Robert with his watery  
smile

And educated whisker. But for me,  
They set an ancient creditor to work;

It seems I broke a close with force and  
arms:

There came a mystic token from the  
king

To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy;  
I read, and fled by night, and flying

turn'd;

Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below;  
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to

the storm;

So left the place, left Edwin, nor have  
seen

Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared  
to hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps; yet  
long ago

I have pardon'd little Letty; not in-  
deed,

It may be, for her own dear sake, but  
this, —

She seems a part of those fresh days  
to me;

For in the dust and drooth of London  
life

She moves among my visions of the  
lake,

While the prime swallow dips his  
wing, or then

While the gold-lily blows, and over-  
head

The light cloud smoulders on the sum-  
mer crag.

#### SAINT SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
From scalp to sole one slough and  
crust of sin,

Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce  
meet

For troops of devils, mad with blas-  
phemy,

I will not cease to grasp the hope I  
hold

Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn,  
and sob,

Battering the gates of heaven with  
storms of prayer,

Have mercy, Lord, and take away my  
sin!

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty  
 God,  
 This not be all in vain, that thrice ten  
 years,  
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman  
 pangs,  
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and  
 cold,  
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous  
 throes and cramps,  
 A sign betwixt the meadow and the  
 cloud,  
 Patient on this tall pillar I have  
 borne  
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp,  
 and sleet, and snow;  
 And I had hoped that ere this period  
 closed  
 Thou wouldst have caught me up into  
 thy rest,  
 Denying not these weather-beaten  
 limbs  
 The meed of saints, the white robe and  
 the palm.  
 O, take the meaning, Lord! I do  
 not breathe,  
 Not whisper, any murmur of com-  
 plaint.  
 Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this,  
 were still  
 Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to  
 bear,  
 Than were those lead-like tons of sin  
 that crush'd  
 My spirit flat before thee.  
 O Lord, Lord,  
 Thou knowest I bore this better at the  
 first,  
 For I was strong and hale of body  
 then;  
 And tho' my teeth, which now are  
 dropt away,  
 Would chatter with the cold, and all  
 my beard  
 Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the  
 moon,  
 I drown'd the whoopings of the owl  
 with sound  
 Of pious hymns and psalms, and some-  
 times saw  
 An angel stand and watch me, as I  
 sang.  
 Now am I feeble grown; my end draws  
 nigh.  
 I hope my end draws nigh; half deaf  
 I am,

So that I scarce can hear the people  
 hum  
 About the column's base, and almost  
 blind,  
 And scarce can recognize the fields I  
 know;  
 And both my thighs are rotted with  
 the dew;  
 Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,  
 While my stiff spine can hold my weary  
 head,  
 Till all my limbs drop piccemeal from  
 the stone,  
 Have mercy, mercy! take away my  
 sin!  
 O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my  
 soul,  
 Who may be saved? who is it may be  
 saved?  
 Who may be made a saint if I fail  
 here?  
 Show me the man hath suffer'd more  
 than I.  
 For did not all thy martyrs die one  
 death?  
 For either they were stoned, or cruci-  
 fied,  
 Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or  
 sawn  
 In twain beneath the ribs; but I die  
 here  
 To-day, and whole years long, a life  
 of death.  
 Bear witness, if I could have found a  
 way—  
 And heedfully I sifted all my  
 thought—  
 More slowly-painful to subdue this  
 home  
 Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and  
 hate,  
 I had not stinted practice, O my God!  
 For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
 Not this alone I bore; but while I lived  
 In the white convent down the valley  
 there,  
 For many weeks about my loins I wore  
 The rope that haled the buckets from  
 the well,  
 Twisted as tight as I could knot the  
 noose,  
 And spake not of it to a single soul,  
 Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
 Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
 My brethren marvell'd greatly. More  
 than this

I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest  
all.

Three winters, that my soul might  
grow to thee, <sup>70</sup>  
I lived up there on yonder mountain-  
side.

My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged  
stones;

Inswathed sometimes in wandering  
mist, and twice

Black'd with thy branding thunder,  
and sometimes

Sucking the damps for drink, and eat-  
ing not,

Except the spare chance-gift of those  
that came

To touch my body and be heal'd, and  
live.

And they say then that I work'd mira-  
cles,

Whereof my fame is loud amongst  
mankind, <sup>80</sup>

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers.  
Thou, O God,

Knowest alone whether this was or no.  
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin!

Then, that I might be more alone  
with thee,

Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of  
twelve;

And twice three years I crouch'd on  
one that rose

Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew  
Twice ten long weary, weary years to  
this,

That numbers forty cubits from the  
soil. <sup>90</sup>

I think that I have borne as much  
as this—

Or else I dream—and for so long a  
time,

If I may measure time by yon slow  
light,

And this high dial, which my sorrow  
crowns—

So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and  
say,

Fall down, O Simeon; thou hast suf-  
fer'd long

For ages and for ages! then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',

Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,

Maybe for months, in such blind leth-  
argies <sup>101</sup>

That Heaven, and Earth, and Time  
are choked.

But yet  
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all  
the saints

Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men  
on earth

House in the shade of comfortable  
roofs,

Sit with their wives by fires, eat whole-  
some food,

And wear warm clothes, and even  
beasts have stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of  
the light,

Bow down one thousand and two hun-  
dred times,

To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the  
saints; <sup>110</sup>

Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake; the chill stars sparkle; I am  
wet

With drenching dew, or stiff with  
crackling frost.

I wear an undress'd goatskin on my  
back;

A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the  
cross,

And strive and wrestle with thee till  
I die.

O, mercy, mercy! wash away my  
sin!

O Lord, thou knowest what a man  
I am;

A sinful man, conceived and born in  
sin. <sup>120</sup>

'Tis their own doing; this is none of  
mine;

Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for  
this,

That here come those that worship  
me? Ha! ha!

They think that I am somewhat.  
What am I?

The silly people take me for a saint,  
And bring me offerings of fruit and  
flowers;

And I, in truth—thou wilt bear wit-  
ness here—

Have all in all endured as much, and  
more

Than many just and holy men, whose  
names

Are register'd and calendar'd for  
saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to  
me.

What is it I can have done to merit  
this?

I am a sinner viler than you all.

It may be I have wrought some mira-  
cles,

And cured some halt and maim'd;  
but what of that?

It may be no one, even among the  
saints,

May match his pains with mine; but  
what of that?

Yet do not rise; for you may look on  
me,

And in your looking you may kneel  
to God.

Speak! is there any of you halt or  
maim'd?

I think you know I have some power  
with Heaven

From my long penance; let him  
speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes  
forth from me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah,  
hark! they shout

'Saint Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,  
God reaps a harvest in me. O my  
soul,

God reaps a harvest in thee! If this be,  
Can I work miracles and not be saved?  
This is not told of any. They were  
saints.

It cannot be but that I shall be saved,  
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout,

'Behold a saint!'  
And lower voices saint me from above.

Courage, Saint Simeon! This dull  
chrysalis

Cracks into shining wings, and hope  
ere death

Spreads more and more and more,  
that God hath now

Sponged and made blank of crimeful  
record all

My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,  
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname

Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,  
The watcher on the column till the

end;  
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine  
bakes;

I, whose bald brows in silent hours  
become

Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
From my high nest of penance here  
proclaim

That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the  
coals I lay,

A vessel full of sin; all hell beneath  
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd  
my sleeve,

Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
I smote them with the cross, they

swarm'd again.  
In bed like monstrous apes they

crush'd my chest;  
They flapp'd my light out as I read;

I saw  
Their faces grow between me and my  
book;

With coltlike whinny and with hog-  
gish whine

They burst my prayer. Yet this way  
was left,

And by this way I 'scaped them.  
Mortify

Your flesh, like me, with scourges  
and with thorns;

Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it  
may be, fast

Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly,  
with slow steps,

With slow, faint steps, and much ex-  
ceeding pain,

Have scrambled past those pits of fire,  
that still

Sing in mine ears. But yield not me  
the praise;

God only thro' his bounty hath  
thought fit,

Among the powers and princes of this  
world,

To make me an example to mankind,  
Which few can reach to. Yet I do

not say  
But that a time may come—yea,

even now,  
Now, now, his footsteps smite the  
threshold stairs

Of life—I say, that time is at the  
doors

When you may worship me without  
reproach;

For I will leave my relics in your land,  
And you may carve a shrine about  
my dust,

And burn a fragrant lamp before my  
bones,  
When I am gather'd to the glorious  
saints.

While I spake then, a sting of  
shrewdest pain  
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloud-  
like change,

In passing, with a grosser film made  
thick

These heavy, horny eyes. The end!  
the end!

Surely the end! What's here? a  
shape, a shade,

A flash of light. Is that the angel  
there 200

That holds a crown? Come, blessed  
brother, come!

I know thy glittering face. I waited  
long;

My brows are ready. What! deny it  
now?

Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I  
clutch it. Christ!

'Tis gone; 'tis here again; the crown!  
the crown!

So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm,  
and frankincense.

Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints;  
I trust

That I am whole, and clean, and meet  
for Heaven. 210

Speak, if there be a priest, a man  
of God,

Among you there, and let him pre-  
sently

Approach, and lean a ladder on the  
shaft,

And climbing up into my airy home,  
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;  
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,  
Aid all this foolish people; let them  
take

Example, pattern; lead them to thy  
light. 220

## THE TALKING OAK

Once more the gate behind me falls;  
Once more before my face

I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
Beneath its drift of smoke;  
And ah! with what delighted eyes  
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
Ere that which in me burn'd, 10  
The love that makes me thrice a man,  
Could hope itself return'd,

To yonder oak within the field  
I spoke without restraint,  
And with a larger faith appeal'd  
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
And told him of my choice,  
Until he plagiarized a heart,  
And answer'd with a voice. 20

Tho' what he whisper'd under heaven  
None else could understand,  
I found him garrulously given,  
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
Is many a weary hour;  
'T were well to question him, and try  
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace, 30  
Whose topmost branches can discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
If ever maid or spouse,  
As fair as my Olivia, came  
To rest beneath thy boughs.

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
Whatever maiden grace  
The good old summers, year by year,  
Made ripe in Sumner-chace; 40

'Old summers, when the monk was  
fat,  
And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
And number'd bead, and shrift,

Bluff Harry broke into the spence  
And turn'd the cowl's adrift.

'And I have seen some score of those  
Fresh faces that would thrive 50  
When his man-minded offset rose  
To chase the deer at five ;

'And all that from the town would  
stroll,  
Till that wild wind made work  
In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
Went by me, like a stork ;

'The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
And others, passing praise,  
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
For puritanic stays. 60

'And I have shadow'd many a group  
Of beauties that were born

In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn ;

'And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
About me leap'd and laugh'd  
The modish Cupid of the day,  
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

'I swear — and else may insects prick  
Each leaf into a gall ! — 70  
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
Is three times worth them all ;

'For those and theirs, by Nature's law,  
Have faded long ago ;  
But in these latter springs I saw  
Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gamboll'd on the  
greens  
A baby-germ, to when



'And I have shadow'd many a group  
Of beauties that were born  
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn'

The maiden blossoms of her teens  
Could number five from ten. 80

'I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain —  
And hear me with thine ears —  
That, tho' I circle in the grain  
Five hundred rings of years,

'Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass;

'For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh, 90  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.'

O, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace,  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Summer-place!

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft hast heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs. 100

'O, yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.

'And with him Albert came on his.  
I look'd at him with joy;  
As cowslip unto oxlip is,  
So seems she to the boy.

'An hour had past — and, sitting  
straight 110  
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays.

'But as for her, she staid at home,  
And on the roof she went,  
And down the way you used to come,  
She look'd with discontent.

'She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf;  
She left the new piano shut;  
She could not please herself. 120

Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
And livelier than a lark

She sent her voice thro' all the holt  
Before her, and the park.

'A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as might be would he cling  
About the darling child;

'But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir, 130  
The flower she touch'd on dipt and  
rose,  
And turn'd to look at her.

'And here she came, and round me  
play'd,  
And sang to me the whole  
Of those three stanzas that you made  
About my "giant bole";

'And in a fit of frolic mirth  
She strove to span my waist.  
Alas! I was so broad of girth,  
I could not be embraced. 140

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech  
That here beside me stands,  
That round me, clasping each in each,  
She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as  
sweet  
As woodbine's fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold.'

O, muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Summer-chace! 150  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Summer-place!

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows  
When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs?

'O, yes, she wander'd round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kiss'd the name she  
found,  
And sweetly murmur'd thine. 160

'A teardrop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse.  
But I believe she wept.



'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy  
light,  
She glanced across the plain,  
But not a creature was in sight;  
She kiss'd me once again.

'Her kisses were so close and kind  
That, trust me on my word, <sup>170</sup>  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr'd;

'And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern'd,  
Like those blind motions of the spring  
That show the year is turn'd.

'Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm —  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden's tender palm. <sup>180</sup>

'I, rooted here among the groves,  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust;

'For ah! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that which breathes within the  
leaf  
Could slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray and branch and stem <sup>190</sup>  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,

'She had not found me so remiss;  
But lightly issuing thro',  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,  
With usury thereto.'

O, flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea!  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,  
But leave thou mine to me. <sup>200</sup>

O, flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well!  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell.

'Tis little more: the day was warm;  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm  
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes <sup>210</sup>  
Thro' all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

'I took the swarming sound of life —  
The music from the town —  
The murmurs of the drum and fife,  
And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye;  
A second flutter'd round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly; <sup>220</sup>

'A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ankle fine.

'Then close and dark my arms I  
spread,  
And shadow'd all her rest —  
Dropt dews upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck'd it out, and drew <sup>230</sup>  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.

'And yet it was a graceful gift —  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

'I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.  
He lies beside thee on the grass.  
O, kiss him once for me! <sup>240</sup>

'O, kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss!  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this.'

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
Look further thro' the chace,  
Spread upward till thy boughs dis  
cern  
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest.  
That but a moment lay <sup>250</sup>  
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
Some happy future day.



'She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball'

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,  
The warmth it thence shall win  
To riper life may magnetize  
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
Or lapse from hand to hand,  
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
Thine acorn in the land. 260

May never saw dismember thee,  
Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
That art the fairest-spoken tree  
From here to Lizard-point.

O, rock upon thy towery top  
All throats that gurgle sweet!  
All starry culmination drop  
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow —  
And while he sinks or swells 270  
The full south-breeze around thee blow  
The sound of minster bells!

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
That under deeply strikes!  
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
High up, in silverspikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
But, rolling as in sleep,  
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
That makes thee broad and deep! 280

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
That only by thy side  
Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,  
 She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
 Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
 In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
 And praise thee more in both <sup>290</sup>  
 Than bard has honor'd beech or lime,  
 Or that Thessalian growth

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
 And mystic sentence spoke ;  
 And more than England honors that,  
 Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode .  
 Till all the paths were dim,  
 And far below the Roundhead rode,  
 And humm'd a surly hymn. <sup>300</sup>

### LOVE AND DUTY

OF love that never found his earthly  
 close,  
 What sequel ? Streaming eyes and  
 breaking hearts ?

Or all the same as if he had not been ?  
 Not so. Shall Error in the round  
 of time

Still father Truth ? O, shall the brag-  
 gart shout

For some blind glimpse of freedom  
 work itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to  
 law,

System, and empire ? Sin itself be  
 found

The cloudy porch oft opening on the  
 sun ?

And only he, this wonder, dead, be-  
 come <sup>10</sup>

Mere highway dust ? or year by year  
 alone

Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
 Nightmare of youth, the spectre of  
 himself ?

If this were thus, if this, indeed,  
 were all,

Better the narrow brain, the stony  
 heart,

The staring eye glazed o'er with sap-  
 less days,

The long mechanic paces to and fro,  
 The set gray life, and apathetic end.

But am I not the nobler thro' thy love ?

O, three times less unworthy ! like-  
 wise thou <sup>20</sup>

Art more thro' Love, and greater than  
 thy years,

The sun will run his orbit, and the  
 moon

Hier circle. Wait, and Love himself  
 will bring

The drooping flower of knowledge  
 changed to fruit

Of wisdom. Wait ; my faith is large  
 in Time,

And that which shapes it to some per-  
 fect end.

Will some one say, Then why not  
 ill for good ?

Why took ye not your pastime ? To  
 that man

My work shall answer, since I knew  
 the right

And did it ; for a man is not as God, <sup>30</sup>  
 But then most Godlike being most a  
 man.—

So let me think 'tis well for thee and  
 me—

Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
 Whose foresight preaches peace, my  
 heart so slow

To feel it ! For how hard it seem'd  
 to me,

When eyes, love-languid thro' half  
 tears, would dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon  
 mine,

Then not to dare to see ! when thy  
 low voice,

Faltering, would break its syllables,  
 to keep

My own full-tuned, — hold passion in  
 a leash, <sup>40</sup>

And not leap forth and fall about thy  
 neck,

And on thy bosom — deep desired re-  
 lief ! —

Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that  
 weigh'd

Upon my brain, my senses, and my  
 soul !

For Love himself took part against  
 himself

To warn us off, and Duty loved of  
 Love—

O, this world's curse — beloved but  
 hated — came

Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace  
 and mine,

And crying, 'Who is this? behold  
thy bride,'  
She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard  
To alien ears, I did not speak to  
these—

No, not to thee, but to thyself in me.  
Hard is my doom and thine; thou  
knowest it all.

Could Love part thus? was it not  
well to speak,  
To have spoken once? It could not  
but be well.

The slow sweet hours that bring us  
all things good,

The slow sad hours that bring us all  
things ill,

And all good things from evil, brought  
the night

In which we sat together and alone,  
And to the want that hollow'd all the  
heart

Gave utterance by the yearning of an  
eye,

That burn'd upon its object thro'  
such tears

As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way  
To those caresses, when a hundred  
times

In that last kiss, which never was the  
last,

Farewell, like endless welcome, lived  
and died.

Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and  
the words

That make a man feel strong in speak-  
ing truth;

Till now the dark was worn, and over-  
head

The lights of sunset and of sunrise  
mix'd

In that brief night, the summer night,  
that paused

Among her stars to hear us, stars that  
hung

Love-charm'd to listen; all the wheels  
of Time

Spun round in station, but the end  
had come.

O, then, like those who clench their  
nerves to rush

Upon their dissolution, we two rose,  
There—closing like an individual  
life—

In one blind cry of passion and of pain,

Like bitter accusation even to death,  
Caught up the whole of love and utter'd  
it,

And bade adieu for ever.

Live—yet live—  
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, know-

ing all  
Life needs for life is possible to  
will?—

Live happy; tend thy flowers; be  
tended by

My blessing! Should my Shadow  
cross thy thoughts

Too sadly for their peace, remand it  
thou

For calmer hours to Memory's darkest  
hold,

If not to be forgotten—not at once—  
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy

dreams,  
O, might it come like one that looks

content,  
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,

And point thee forward to a distant  
light,

Or seem to lift a burthen from thy  
heart

And leave thee freer, till thou wake  
refresh'd

Then when the first low matin-chirp  
hath grown

Full quire, and morning driven her  
plow of pearl

Far furrowing into light the mounded  
rack,

Beyond the fair green field and eastern  
sea.

## THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which  
Leonard wrote:

It was last summer on a tour in Wales.  
Old James was with me; we that day

had been  
Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leon-

ard there,  
And found him in Llanberis. Then

we crost  
Between the lakes, and clamber'd half-

way up  
The counter side; and that same song

of his  
He told me, for I banter'd him and

swore

They said he lived shut up within him-  
 self,  
 A tongue-tied poet in the feverous  
 days<sup>10</sup>  
 That, setting the *how much* before the  
*how*,  
 Cry, like the daughters of the horse-  
 leech, 'Give,  
 Cram us with all,' but count not me  
 the herd!  
 To which 'They call me what they  
 will,' he said:  
 'But I was born too late; the fair  
 new forms,  
 That float about the threshold of an  
 age,  
 Like truths of Science waiting to be  
 caught—  
 Catch me who can, and make the  
 catcher crown'd—  
 Are taken by the forelock. Let it  
 be.  
 But if you care indeed to listen, hear<sup>20</sup>  
 These measured words, my work of  
 yester-morn:  
 'We sleep and wake and sleep, but  
 all things move;  
 The sun flies forward to his brother  
 sun;  
 The dark earth follows wheel'd in her  
 ellipse;  
 And human things returning on them-  
 selves  
 Move onward, leading up the golden  
 year.  
 'Ah! tho' the times when some new  
 thought can bud  
 Are but as poets' seasons when they  
 flower,  
 Yet seas that daily gain upon the shore  
 Have ebb and flow conditioning their  
 march,<sup>30</sup>  
 And slow and sure comes up the  
 golden year;  
 'When wealth no more shall rest in  
 mounded heaps,  
 But smit with freer light shall slowly  
 melt  
 In new streams to fatten lower lands,  
 And light shall spread, and man be  
 liker man  
 Thro' all the season of the golden year.  
 'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens  
 be wrens?  
 If all the world were falcons, what of  
 that?

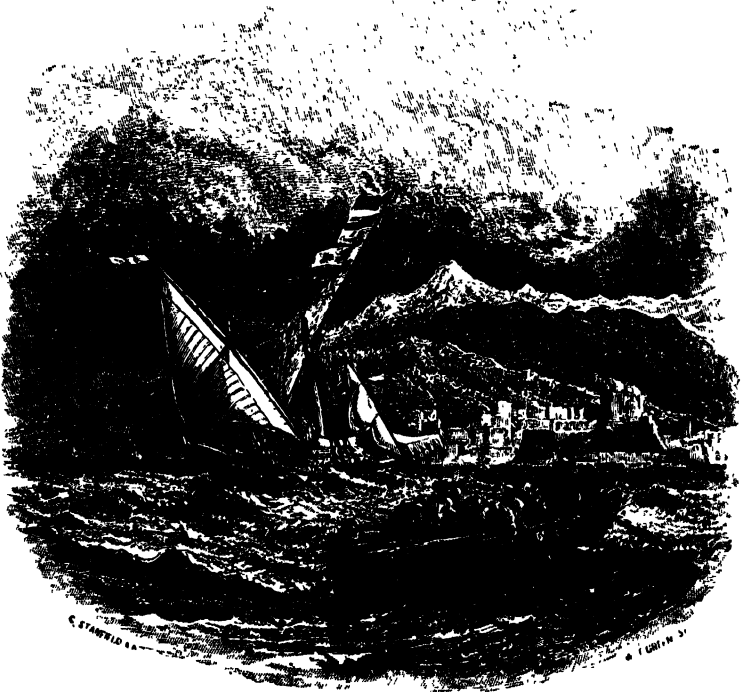
The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
 But he not less the eagle. Happy  
 days<sup>40</sup>  
 Roll onward, leading up the golden  
 year.  
 'Fly, happy, happy sails, and bear  
 the Press;  
 Fly happy with the mission of the  
 Cross;  
 Knit land to land, and blowing haven-  
 ward  
 With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear  
 of toll,  
 Enrich the markets of the golden year.  
 'But we grow old. Ah! when shall  
 all men's good  
 Be each man's rule, and universal  
 Peace  
 Lie like a shaft of light across the  
 land,  
 And like a lane of beams athwart the  
 sea,<sup>50</sup>  
 Thro' all the circle of the golden year?'  
 Thus far he flow'd, and ended; where-  
 upon  
 'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence answer'd  
 James—  
 'Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,  
 Not in our time, nor in our children's  
 time,  
 'Tis like the second world to us that  
 live;  
 'T were all as one to fix our hopes on  
 heaven  
 As on this vision of the golden year.'  
 With that he struck his staff against  
 the rocks  
 And broke it, — James, — you know  
 him, — old, but full<sup>60</sup>  
 Of force and choler, and firm upon his  
 feet,  
 And like an oaken stock in winter  
 woods,  
 O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis;  
 Then added, all in heat:  
 'What stuff is this!  
 Old writers push'd the happy season  
 back, —  
 The more fools they, — we forward;  
 dreamers both —  
 You most, that, in an age when every  
 hour  
 Must sweat her sixty minutes to the  
 death,  
 Live on, God love us, as if the seeds-  
 man, rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not  
 plunge  
 His hand into the bag; but well I<sup>70</sup>  
 know  
 That unto him who works, and feels  
 he works,  
 This same grand year is ever at the  
 doors.  
 He spoke; and, high above, I heard  
 them blast  
 The steep slate-quarry, and the great  
 echo flap  
 And buffet round the hills, from bluff  
 to bluff.

ULYSSES

In little profits that an idle king,  
 By this still hearth, among these bar-  
 ren crags,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete  
 and dole  
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and  
 know not me.  
 I cannot rest from travel; I will drink  
 Life to the lees. All times I have  
 enjoy'd  
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both  
 with those  
 That loved me, and alone; on shore,  
 and when  
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy  
 Hyades<sup>10</sup>  
 Vext the dim sea. I am become a  
 name;  
 For always roaming with a hungry  
 heart  
 Much have I seen and known, — cities  
 of men



'There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;  
 There gloom the dark, broad seas'

And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
 Myself not least, but honor'd of them  
 all, —  
 And drunk delight of battle with my  
 peers,  
 Far on the ringing plains of windy  
 Troy.

I am a part of all that I have met ;  
 Yet all experience is an arch where-  
 thro'

Gleams that untravell'd world whose  
 margin fades <sup>20</sup>

For ever and for ever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an  
 end,

To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in  
 use !

As tho' to breathe were life ! Life  
 piled on life

Were all too little, and of one to  
 me

Little remains ; but every hour is  
 saved

From that eternal silence, something  
 more,

A bringer of new things ; and vile it  
 were

For some three suns to store and hoard  
 myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in  
 desire <sup>30</sup>

To follow knowledge like a sinking  
 star,

Beyond the utmost bound of human  
 thought.

This is my son, mine own Telema-  
 chus,

To whom I leave the sceptre and the  
 isle, —

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
 This labor, by slow prudence to make  
 mild

A rugged people, and thro' soft de-  
 grees

Subdue them to the useful and the  
 good.

Most blameless is he, centred in the  
 sphere

Of common duties, decent not to fail <sup>40</sup>  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay

Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work,  
 I mine.

There lies the port ; the vessel puffs  
 her sail ;

There gloom the dark, broad seas.  
 My mariners,

Souls that have toil'd, and wrought,  
 and thought with me, —

That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and  
 opposed

Free hearts, free foreheads, — you and  
 I are old ;

Old age hath yet his honor and his  
 toil. <sup>50</sup>

Death closes all ; but something ere  
 the end,

Some work of noble note, may yet be  
 done,

Not unbecoming men that strove with  
 Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the  
 rocks ;

The long day wanes ; the slow moon  
 climbs ; the deep

Moans round with many voices.  
 Come, my friends.

'T is not too late to seek a newer  
 world.

Push off, and sitting well in order  
 smite

The sounding furrows ; for my pur-  
 pose holds

To sail beyond the sunset, and the  
 baths <sup>60</sup>

Of all the western stars, until I die.  
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us  
 down ;

It may be that the gulfs will wash us  
 down ;

It may be we shall touch the Happy  
 Isles,

And see the great Achilles, whom we  
 knew.

Tho' much is taken, much abides ;  
 and tho'

We are not now that strength which  
 in old days

Moved earth and heaven, that which  
 we are, we are, —

One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
 Made weak by time and fate, but  
 strong in will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to  
 yield. <sup>70</sup>

### TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay  
 and fall,

The vapors weep their burthen to the  
 ground,

Man comes and tills the field and lies  
     bencath,  
 And after many a summer dies the  
     swan.  
 Me only cruel immortality  
 Consumes; I wither slowly in thine  
     arms,  
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a  
     dream  
 The ever-silent spaces of the East,  
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls  
     of morn. <sup>10</sup>  
     Alas! for this gray shadow, once a  
     man —  
 So glorious in his beauty and thy  
     choice,  
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he  
     seem'd  
 To his great heart none other than a  
     God!  
 I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'  
 Then didst thou grant mine asking  
     with a smile,  
 Like wealthy men who care not how  
     they give.  
 But thy strong Hours indignant work'd  
     their wills,  
 And beat me down and marr'd and  
     wasted me,  
 And tho' they could not end me, left  
     me maim'd <sup>20</sup>  
 To dwell in presence of immortal  
     youth,  
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
 And all I was in ashes. Can thy  
     love,  
 Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even  
     now,  
 Close over us, the silver star, thy  
     guide,  
 Shines in those tremulous eyes that  
     fill with tears  
 To hear me? Let me go; take back  
     thy gift.  
 Why should a man desire in any way  
 To vary from the kindly race of men,  
 Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance <sup>30</sup>  
 Where all should pause, as is most  
     meet for all?  
     A soft air fans the cloud apart;  
     there comes  
 A glimpse of that dark world where I  
     was born.  
 Once more the old mysterious glim-  
     mer steals

From thy pure brows, and from thy  
     shoulders pure,  
 And bosom beating with a heart re-  
     new'd.  
 Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the  
     gloom,  
 Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close  
     to mine,  
 Ere yet they blind the stars, and the  
     wild team  
 Which love thee, yearning for thy  
     yoke, arise, <sup>40</sup>  
 And shake the darkness from their  
     loosen'd manes,  
 And beat the twilight into flakes of  
     fire.  
     Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
 In silence, then before thine answer  
     given  
 Departest, and thy tears are on my  
     cheek.  
     Why wilt thou ever scare me with  
     thy tears,  
 And make me tremble lest a saying  
     learnt,  
 In days far off, on that dark earth, be  
     true?  
 'The Gods themselves cannot recall  
     their gifts.'  
     Ay me! ay me! with what an-  
     other heart <sup>50</sup>  
 In days far-off, and with what other  
     eyes  
 I used to watch—if I be he that  
     watch'd—  
 The lucid outline forming round thee;  
     saw  
 The dim curls kindle into sunny  
     rings;  
 Changed with thy mystic change, and  
     felt my blood  
 Glow with the glow that slowly crim-  
     son'd all  
 Thy presence and thy portals, while I  
     lay,  
 Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing  
     dewy-warm  
 With kisses balmier than half-opening  
     buds  
 Of April, and could hear the lips that  
     kiss'd <sup>60</sup>  
 Whispering I knew not what of wild  
     and sweet,  
 Like that strange song I heard Apollo  
     sing,  
 While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.



Yet hold me not for ever in thine  
 East ;  
 How can my nature longer mix with  
 thine ?  
 Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me,  
 cold  
 Are all thy lights, and cold my  
 wrinkled feet  
 Upon thy glimmering thresholds,  
 when the steam  
 Floats up from those dim fields about  
 the homes  
 Of happy men that have the power to  
 die, 70  
 And grassy barrows of the happier  
 dead.  
 Release me, and restore me to the  
 ground.  
 Thou seest all things, thou wilt see  
 my grave ;  
 Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by  
 morn,  
 I earth in earth forget these empty  
 courts,  
 And thee returning on thy silver  
 wheels.

### LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little,  
 while as yet 't is early morn ;  
 Leave me here, and when you want  
 me, sound upon the bugle-  
 horn.

'T is the place, and all around it, as of  
 old, the curlews call,  
 Dreary gleams about the moorland  
 flying over Locksley Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance  
 overlooks the sandy tracts,  
 And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring  
 into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied case-  
 ment, ere I went to rest,  
 Did I look on great Orion sloping  
 slowly to the west.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, ris-  
 ing thro' the mellow shade,  
 Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled  
 in a silver braid. 10

Here about the beach I wander'd,  
 nourishing a youth sublime  
 With the fairy tales of science, and  
 the long result of time ;

When the centuries behind me like a  
 fruitful land reposed ;  
 When I clung to all the present for  
 the promise that it closed ;

When I dipt into the future far as  
 human eye could see,  
 Saw the vision of the world and all  
 the wonder that would be.—

In the spring a fuller crimson comes  
 upon the robin's breast ;  
 In the spring the wanton lapwing gets  
 himself another crest ;

In the spring a livelier iris changes on  
 the burnish'd dove ;  
 In the spring a young man's fancy  
 lightly turns to thoughts of  
 love. 20

Then her cheek was pale and thinner  
 than should be for one so  
 young,  
 And her eyes on all my motions with  
 a mute observance hung.

And I said, ' My cousin Amy, speak,  
 and speak the truth to me,  
 Trust me, cousin, all the current of  
 my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came  
 a color and a light,  
 As I have seen the rosy red flushing  
 in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken  
 with a sudden storm of sighs—  
 All the spirit deeply dawning in the  
 dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, ' I have hid my feelings, fear-  
 ing they should do me wrong ;'  
 Saying, ' Dost thou love me, cousin ?'  
 weeping, ' I have loved thee  
 long.' 30

Love took up the glass of Time,  
 and turn'd it in his glowing  
 hands :



' Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is early morn '

Every moment, lightly shaken, ran  
itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and  
smote on all the chords with  
might;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trem-  
bling, past in music out of  
sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did  
we hear the corpses ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses  
with the fulness of the spring.

Many an evening by the waters did  
we watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the  
touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O  
my Amy, mine no more!  
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the  
barren, barren shore!

40

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser  
than all songs have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile  
to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—hav-  
ing known me—to decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a  
narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be; thou shalt lower to his  
level day by day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse  
to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou  
art mated with a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will  
have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion  
shall have spent its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a little  
dearer than his horse. 50

What is this? his eyes are heavy; think  
not they are glazed with wine.  
Go to him, it is thy duty; kiss him;  
take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his  
brain is overwrought;  
Soothe him with thy finer fancies,  
touch him with thy lighter  
thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy  
things to understand —  
Better thou wert dead before me,  
tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden  
from the heart's disgrace,  
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent  
in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin  
against the strength of youth!  
Cursed be the social lies that warp us  
from the living truth! 60

Cursed be the sickly forms that err  
from honest Nature's rule!  
Cursed be the gold that gilds the  
straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well — 'tis well that I should blus-  
ter! — Hadst thou less un-  
worthy proved —  
Would to God — for I had loved thee  
more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that  
which bears but bitter fruit?  
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho'  
my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such  
length of years should come  
As the many-winter'd crowd that leads  
the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the  
records of the mind?  
Can I part her from herself, and love  
her, as I knew her, kind? 70

I remember one that perish'd; sweetly  
did she speak and move;  
Such a one do I remember, whom to  
look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love  
her for the love she bore?  
No — she never loved me truly; love  
is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils!  
this is truth the poet sings,  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is  
remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn  
it, lest thy heart be put to  
proof,  
In the dead unhappy night, and when  
the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and  
thou art staring at the wall,  
Where the dying night-lamp flick-  
ers, and the shadows rise and  
fall. 80

Then a hand shall pass before thee,  
pointing to his drunken sleep,  
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to  
the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,'  
whisper'd by the phantom years,  
And a song from out the distance in  
the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking  
ancient kindness on thy pain.  
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow;  
get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace;  
for a tender voice will cry.  
'Tis a purer life than thine, a lip to  
drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my  
latest rival brings thee rest.  
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me  
from the mother's breast. 90

O, the child too clothes the father  
with a dearness not his due.  
Half is thine and half is his; it will  
be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to  
thy petty part,  
With a little hoard of maxims preach-  
ing down a daughter's heart.

What is that which I should turn to,  
lighting upon days like these?  
Every door is barr'd with gold, and  
opens but to golden keys. 100

Every gate is throng'd with suitors,  
all the markets overflow.  
I have but an angry fancy; what is  
that which I should do?



'Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships'

'They were dangerous guides the feel-  
ings—she herself was not ex-  
empt—  
Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Per-  
ish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy!  
wherefore should I care?  
I myself must mix with action, lest I  
wither by despair.

I had been content to perish, falling  
on the foeman's ground,  
When the ranks are roll'd in vapor,  
and the winds are laid with  
sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps  
the hurt that Honor feels,  
And the nations do but murmur, snarl-  
ing at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will  
turn that earlier page.  
Hide me from my deep emotion, O  
thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that  
I felt before the strife,  
When I heard my days before me, and  
the tumult of my life; 110

Yearning for the large excitement that  
the coming years would yield,  
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he  
leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky high-  
way near and nearer drawn,  
Sees in heaven the light of London  
flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be  
gone before him then,  
Underneath the light he looks at, in  
among the throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers,  
ever reaping something new;  
That which they have done but earnest  
of the things that they shall do.

For I dipt into the future, far as  
human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all  
the wonder that would be; 120

Saw the heavens fill with commerce,  
argosies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping  
down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shout-  
ing, and there rain'd a ghastly  
dew  
From the nations' airy navies grap-  
pling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of  
the south-wind rushing warm,  
With the standards of the peoples  
plunging thro' the thunder-  
storm;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer,  
and the battle-flags were fur'd  
In the Parliament of man, the Feder-  
ation of the world.

There the common sense of most  
shall hold a fretful realm in  
awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber,  
lapt in universal law. 130

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweep-  
ing thro' me left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and  
left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all  
things here are out of joint.  
Science moves, but slowly, slowly,  
creeping on from point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a  
lion, creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks  
behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one  
increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd  
with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not  
harvest of his youthful joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat  
for ever like a boy's? 140

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lin-  
gers, and I linger on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the  
world is more and more

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers,  
and he bears a laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving to-  
ward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me,  
sounding on the bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion  
were a target for their scorn.

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on  
such a moulder'd string?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to  
have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weak-  
ness! woman's pleasure, wo-  
man's pain — 149  
Nature made them blinder motions  
bounded in a shallower brain.

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy  
passions, match'd with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and  
as water unto wine —

Here at least, where nature sickens,  
nothing. Ah, for some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where  
my life began to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell  
my father evil-starr'd; —  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a  
selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there  
to wander far away,  
On from island unto island at the  
gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow  
moons and happy skies,  
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in  
cluster, knots of Paradise. 160

Never comes the trader, never floats  
an European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland,  
swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy blossom'd bower,  
hangs the heavy-fruited tree —  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-  
purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment  
more than in this march of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the  
thoughts that shake mankind.



'Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest rival brings thee rest.  
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast'

There the passions cramp'd no longer  
shall have scope and breathing  
space;

I will take some savage woman, she  
shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall  
dive, and they shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and  
hurl their lances in the sun; 170

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap  
the rainbows of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over  
miserable books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but  
I *know* my words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower  
than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads,  
vacant of our glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like  
a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage — what  
to me were sun or clime?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the fore-  
most files of time —

I that rather held it better men should  
perish one by one, 179  
Than that earth should stand at gaze  
like Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons.  
Forward, forward let us range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down  
the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we  
sweep into the younger day;  
Better fifty years of Europe than a  
cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age, — for mine I knew not, —  
help me as when life begun;  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash  
the lightnings, weigh the sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my  
spirit hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well  
thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long  
farewell to Locksley Hall!  
Now for me the woods may wither,  
now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, black-  
ening over heath andholt, 191  
Cramming all the blast before it, in  
its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain  
or hail, or fire or snow;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring  
seaward, and I go.

### GODIVA

*I WAITED for the train at Coventry;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the  
bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires; and there  
I shaped*

*The city's ancient legend into this: —*  
Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that  
prate

Of rights and wrongs, have loved the  
people well,  
And loathed to see them overtax'd;  
but she

Did more, and underwent, and over-  
came, 10  
The woman of a thousand summers  
back,

Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who  
ruled

In Coventry; for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers  
brought

Their children, clamoring, 'If we pay,  
we starve!'

She sought her lord, and found him,  
where he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair  
A yard behind. She told him of their  
tears,

And pray'd him, 'If they pay this tax,  
they starve.' 20

Whereat he stared, replying, half-  
amazed,

'You would not let your little finger  
ache

For such as *these?* — 'But I would  
die,' said she.  
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and  
by Paul,  
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear :  
'O, ay, ay, ay, you talk!' — 'Alas!'  
she said,  
'But prove me what it is I would not  
do.'

As winds from all the compass shift  
and blow,  
Made war upon each other for an  
hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trum-  
pet, all  
The hard condition, but that she would  
loose



'Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there  
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt'

And from a heart as rough as Esau's  
hand,  
He answer'd, 'Ride you naked thro'  
the town,  
And I repeat it;' and nodding, as in  
scorn,  
He parted, with great strides among  
his dogs.  
So left alone, the passions of her  
mind,

The people; therefore, as they loved  
her well,  
From then till noon no foot should  
pace the street,  
No eye look down, she passing, but  
that all  
Should keep within, door shut, and  
window barr'd.  
Then fled she to her inmost bower  
and there



Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her  
 belt,  
 The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a  
 breath  
 She linger'd, looking like a summer  
 moon  
 Half-dipt in cloud. Anon she shook  
 her head,  
 And shower'd the rippled ringlets to  
 her knee;  
 Unclad herself in haste; adown the  
 stair  
 Stole on; and like a creeping sunbeam  
 slid  
 From pillar unto pillar, until she  
 reach'd<sup>50</sup>  
 The gateway; there she found her  
 palfrey trapt  
 In purple blazon'd with armorial  
 gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with  
 chastity.  
 The deep air listen'd round her as she  
 rode,  
 And all the low wind hardly breathed  
 for fear.  
 The little wide-mouth'd heads upon  
 the spout  
 Had cunning eyes to see; the barking  
 cur  
 Made her cheek flame; her palfrey's  
 footfall shot  
 Light horrors thro' her pulsés; the  
 blind walls  
 Were full of chinks and holes; and  
 overhead<sup>60</sup>  
 Fantastic gables, crowding, stared;  
 but she  
 Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she  
 saw  
 The white-flower'd elder-thicket from  
 the field  
 Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the  
 wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with  
 chastity.  
 And one low churl, compact of thank-  
 less earth,  
 • The fatal byword of all years to come,  
 Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  
 Peep'd — but his eyes, before they had  
 their will,  
 Were shrivell'd into darkness in his  
 head,<sup>70</sup>  
 And dropt before him. So the Powers,  
 who wait

On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense mis-  
 used;  
 And she, that knew not, pass'd; and  
 all at once,  
 With twelve great shocks of sound,  
 the shameless noon  
 Was clash'd and hammer'd from a  
 hundred towers,  
 One after one; but even then she  
 gain'd  
 Her bower, whence reissuing, robed  
 and crown'd,  
 To meet her lord, she took the tax  
 away  
 And built herself an everlasting name.

## THE DAY-DREAM

### PROLOGUE

O LADY FLORA, let me speak;  
 A pleasant hour has passed away  
 While, dreaming on your damask  
 cheek,  
 The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
 As by the lattice you reclined,  
 I went thro' many wayward moods  
 To see you dreaming — and, behind,  
 A summer crisp with shining woods.  
 And I too dream'd, until at last  
 Across my fancy, brooding warm,<sup>10</sup>  
 The reflex of a legend past,  
 And loosely settled into form.  
 And would you have the thought I had,  
 And see the vision that I saw,  
 Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
 A crimson to the quaint macaw,  
 And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
 Nor look with that too-earnest eye —  
 The rhymes are dazzled from their  
 place  
 And order'd words asunder fly.<sup>20</sup>

### THE SLEEPING PALACE

#### I

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
 Clothes and reclothes the happy  
 plains,  
 Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
 Here stays the blood along the veins.  
 Faint shadows, vapors lightly curl'd,  
 Faint murmurs from the meadows  
 come,  
 Like hints and echoes of the world  
 To spirits folded in the womb.



'The page has caught her hand in his ;  
Her lips are sever'd as to speak'

## II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
On every slanting terrace-lawn. 30  
The fountain to his place returns  
Deep in the garden lake with-  
drawn.  
Here droops the banner on the tower,  
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
The peacock in his laurel bower,  
The parrot in his gilded wires.

## III

Roof-haunting martins warm their  
eggs ;  
In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
The mantles from the golden pegs  
Droop sleepily ; no sound is made, 40  
Not even of a gnat that sings.  
More like a picture seemeth all  
Than those old portraits of old kings,  
That watch the sleepers from the  
wall.

## IV

Here sits the butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and  
there  
The wrinkled steward at his task,  
The maid-of-honor blooming fair.  
The page has caught her hand in his ;  
Her lips are sever'd as to speak ; 50  
His own are pouted to a kiss ;  
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

## V

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
The beams that thro' the oriel  
shine  
Make prisms in every carven glass  
And beaker brimm'd with noble  
wine.  
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
His state the king reposing keeps.  
He must have been a jovial king. 60

## VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and  
shows

At distance like a little wood;  
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
And grapes with bunches red as  
blood;

All creeping plants, a wall of green  
Close-matted, bur and brake and  
brier,

And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
High up, the topmost palace spire.

## VII

When will the hundred summers  
die,

And thought and time be born  
again,<sup>70</sup>  
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
Bring truth that sways the soul of  
men?

Here all things in their place remain,  
As all were order'd, ages since.

Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and  
Pain,  
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

## I

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purple coverlet  
The maiden's jet-black hair has  
grown,<sup>80</sup>  
On either side her tranced form  
Forth streaming from a braid of  
pearl;

The slumbrous light is rich and  
warm,  
And moves not on the rounded  
curl.

## II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
Languidly ever; and, amid  
Her full black ringlets downward  
roll'd,  
Glow's forth each softly-shadow'd  
arm

With bracelets of the diamond  
bright.<sup>90</sup>  
Her constant beauty doth inform  
Stillness with love, and day with  
light.

## III

She sleeps; her breathings are not  
heard

In palace chambers far apart.  
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
That lie upon her charmed heart.  
She sleeps; on either hand upswells  
The gold-fringed pillow lightly  
prest;

She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever  
dwells

A perfect form in perfect rest. 100

## THE ARRIVAL

## I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
To those that seek them issue forth;  
For love in sequel works with fate,  
And draws the veil from hidden  
worth.

He travels far from other skies —  
His mantle glitters on the rocks —  
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
And lighter-footed than the fox.

## II

The bodies and the bones of those  
That strove in other days to pass<sup>110</sup>  
Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
He gazes on the silent dead:  
'They perish'd in their daring  
deeds.'

This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
'The many fail, the one succeeds.'

## III

He comes, scarce knowing what he  
seeks;  
He breaks the hedge; he enters  
there;

The color flies into his cheeks;  
He trusts to light on something  
fair;<sup>120</sup>

For all his life the charm did talk  
About his path, and hover near  
With words of promise in his walk,  
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

## IV

More close and close his footsteps  
wind;

The Magic Music in his heart  
Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
The quiet chamber far apart.

His spirit flutters like a lark,  
 He stoops — to kiss her — on his  
 knee. 130  
 'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
 How dark those hidden eyes must  
 be!'

## THE REVIVAL

## I

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was  
 snapt.  
 There rose a noise of striking  
 clocks,  
 And feet that ran, and doors that  
 clapt,  
 And barking dogs, and crowing  
 cocks;  
 A fuller light illumined all,  
 A breeze thro' all the garden  
 swept,  
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt. 140

## II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
 The butler drank, the steward  
 scrawl'd,  
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock  
 squall'd,  
 The maid and page renew'd their  
 strife,  
 The palace bang'd and buzz'd and  
 clackt,  
 And all the long-pent stream of life  
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III

And last with these the king awoke,  
 And in his chair himself uprear'd, 150  
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and  
 spoke,  
 'By holy rood, a royal beard!  
 How say you? we have slept, my  
 lords.  
 My beard has grown into my lap.'



“How say you? we have slept, my lords.  
 My beard has grown into my lap”

The barons swore, with many words,  
'T was but an after-dinner's nap.

## IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still  
My joints are somewhat stiff or so.  
My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
I mention'd half an hour ago?' 160  
The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
In courteous words return'd reply,  
But dallied with his golden chain,  
And, smiling, put the question by.

## THE DEPARTURE

## I

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
And round her waist she felt it fold,  
And far across the hills they went  
In that new world which is the  
old;  
Across the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim, 170  
And deep into the dying day  
The happy princess follow'd him.

## II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,  
O love, for such another kiss;'  
'O, wake for ever, love,' she hears;  
'O love, 't was such as this and  
this.'  
And o'er them many a sliding star  
And many a merry wind was  
borne,  
And, stream'd thro' many a golden  
bar,  
The twilight melted into morn. 180

## III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!'  
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!'  
O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!'  
'O love, thy kiss would wake the  
dead!'  
And o'er them many a flowing range  
Of vapor buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dark.

## IV

'A hundred summers! can it be?  
And whither goest thou, tell me  
where?' 190  
O, seek my father's court with me,  
For there are greater wonders there.'

And o'er the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

## MORAL

## I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And if you find no moral there,  
Go, look in any glass and say,  
What moral is in being fair. 200  
O, to what uses shall we put  
The wildweed-flower that simply  
blows?  
And is there any moral shut  
Within the bosom of the rose?

## II

But any man that walks the mead,  
In bud or blade or bloom, may  
find,  
According as his humors lead,  
A meaning suited to his mind.  
And liberal applications lie  
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;  
So 't were to cramp its use if I 210  
Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOI

## I

You shake your head. A random  
string  
Your finer female sense offends.  
Well — were it not a pleasant thing  
To fall asleep with all one's friends;  
To pass with all our social ties  
To silence from the paths of men,  
And every hundred years to rise  
And learn the world, and sleep  
again; 220  
To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
And wake on science grown to  
more,  
On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
As wild as aught of fairy lore;  
And all that else the years will  
show,  
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
The vast Republics that may grow,  
The Federations and the Powers;  
Titanic forces taking birth  
In divers seasons, divers climes? 230  
For we are Ancients of the earth,  
And in the morning of the times.

## II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
 Thro' sunny decads new and strange,  
 Or gay quinqueniads, would we  
 reap  
 The flower and quintessence of  
 change.

## III

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!  
 So much your eyes my fancy take—  
 Be still the first to leap to light  
 That I might kiss those eyes awake!  
 For, am I right, or am I wrong, <sup>241</sup>  
 To choose your own you did not  
 care;  
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
 And I will take my pleasure there;  
 And, am I right or am I wrong,  
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',  
 To search a meaning for the song,  
 Perforce will still revert to you,  
 Nor finds a closer truth than this  
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,  
 And evermore a costly kiss <sup>251</sup>  
 The prelude to some brighter world.

## IV

For since the time when Adam first  
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
 And every bird of Eden burst  
 In carol, every bud to flower,  
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd  
 hopes,  
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly  
 join'd?  
 Where on the double rosebud droops  
 The fulness of the pensive mind; <sup>260</sup>  
 Which, all too dearly self-involved,  
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me,—  
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
 That lets thee neither hear nor see:  
 But break it. In the name of wife,  
 And in the rights that name may  
 give,  
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
 And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And if you find a meaning there, <sup>270</sup>  
 O, whisper to your glass, and say,  
 'What wonder if he thinks me fair?'  
 What wonder I was all unwise,  
 To shape the song for your delight

Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise  
 That float thro' heaven, and cannot  
 light?  
 Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
 But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
 And either sacred unto you. <sup>280</sup>

## AMPHION

My father left a park to me,  
 But it is wild and barren,  
 A garden too with scarce a tree,  
 And waster than a warren;  
 Yet say the neighbors when they call  
 It is not bad but good land,  
 And in it is the germ of all  
 That grows within the woodland.

O, had I lived when song was great  
 In days of old Amphion, <sup>10</sup>  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 Nor cared for seed or scion!  
 And had I lived when song was great,  
 And legs of trees were limber,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 And fiddled in the timber!

'T is said he had a tuneful tongue,  
 Such happy intonation,  
 Wherever he sat down and sung  
 He left a small plantation; <sup>20</sup>  
 Wherever in a lonely grove  
 He set up his forlorn pipes,  
 The gouty oak began to move,  
 And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,  
 And, as tradition teaches,  
 Young ashes pirouetted down  
 Coquetting with young beeches;  
 And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
 Ran forward to his rhyming, <sup>30</sup>  
 And from the valleys underneath  
 Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
 The woodbine wreaths that bind  
 her,  
 And down the middle, buzz! she went  
 With all her bees behind her;  
 The poplars, in long order due,  
 With cypress promenaded,  
 The shock-head willows two and two  
 By rivers galloped. <sup>40</sup>

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,  
 Came yews, a dismal coterie;  
 Each pluck'd his one foot from the  
 grave,

Poussetting with a sloe-tree;  
 Old elms came breaking from the  
 vine,  
 The vine stream'd out to follow,  
 And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
 From many a cloudy hollow.

And was n't it a sight to see,  
 When, ere his song was ended, <sup>50</sup>  
 Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
 The country-side descended;  
 And shepherds from the mountain-  
 eaves  
 Look'd down, half-pleased, half-  
 frighten'd,  
 As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
 The random sunshine lighten'd?

O, Nature first was fresh to men,  
 And wanton without measure;  
 So youthful and so flexible then,  
 You moved her at your pleasure. <sup>60</sup>  
 Twang out, my fiddle! shake the  
 twigs!  
 And make her dance attendance;  
 Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,  
 And scirrhous roots and tendons!

'Tis vain! in such a brassy age  
 I could not move a thistle;  
 The very sparrows in the hedge  
 Scarce answer to my whistle;  
 Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
 With strumming and with scraping,  
 A jackass heehaws from the rick, <sup>71</sup>  
 The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound  
 Like sleepy counsel pleading;  
 O Lord!—'tis in my neighbor's  
 ground,  
 The modern Muses reading.  
 They read Botanic Treatises,  
 And Works on Gardening thro'  
 there,  
 And Methods of Transplanting Trees  
 To look as if they grew there. <sup>80</sup>

The wither'd Misses! how they prose  
 O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
 And show you slips of all that grows  
 From England to Van Diemen.

They read in arbors clipt and cut,  
 And alleys, faded places,  
 By squares of tropic summer shut  
 And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
 Are neither green nor sappy; <sup>94</sup>  
 Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
 The spindlings look unhappy.  
 Better to me the meanest weed  
 That blows upon its mountain,  
 The vilest herb that runs to seed  
 Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,  
 And years of cultivation,  
 Upon my proper patch of soil  
 To grow my own plantation. <sup>100</sup>  
 I'll take the showers as they fall,  
 I will not vex my bosom;  
 Enough if at the end of all  
 A little garden blossom.

#### SAINT AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
 Are sparkling to the moon;  
 My breath to heaven like vapor goes;  
 May my soul follow soon!  
 The shadows of the convent-towers  
 Slant down the snowy sward,  
 Still creeping with the creeping hours  
 That lead me to my Lord.  
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
 As are the frosty skies,  
 Or this first snowdrop of the year  
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and  
 dark,  
 To yonder shining ground;  
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
 To yonder argent round;  
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
 My spirit before Thee;  
 So in mine earthly house I am,  
 To that I hope to be.  
 Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,  
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering  
 star,  
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;  
 The flashes come and go;



'My breath to heaven like vapor goes ;  
May my soul follow soon'

All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
And strows her lights below,  
And deepens on and up ! the gates  
Roll back, and far within  
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom  
waits,  
To make me pure of sin.  
The Sabbaths of Eternity,  
One Sabbath deep and wide—  
A light upon the shining sea—  
The Bridegroom with his bride !

EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder  
town  
Met me walking on yonder way ;

'And have you lost your heart ?' she  
said ;  
'And are you married yet, Edward  
Gray ?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me .  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
Can touch the heart of Edward  
Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's  
will ;  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy  
hill.



'Shy she was, and I thought her  
cold,  
Thought her proud, and fled over  
the sea;  
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said!  
Cruelly came they back to-day:  
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,  
'To trouble the heart of Edward  
Gray.'

'There I put my face in the grass —  
Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair;  
I repent me of all I did;  
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;  
And here the heart of Edward  
Gray!"

'Love may come, and love may go,  
And fly, like a bird, from tree to  
tree;  
But I will love no more, no more,  
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone;  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away.  
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!  
And there the heart of Edward  
Gray!'

### SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of  
men,

My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
My strength is as the strength of ten,  
Because my heart is pure.  
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
The hard brands shiver on the steel.  
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and  
fly,

The horse and rider reel;  
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
And when the tide of combat stands,  
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
On whom their favors fall!

For them I battle till the end,  
To save from shame and thrall;  
But all my heart is drawn above,  
My knees are bow'd in crypt and  
shrine;

I never felt the kiss of love,  
Nor maiden's hand in mine. <sup>20</sup>  
More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
Me mightier transports move and  
thrill;  
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent  
goes,

A light before me swims,  
Between dark stems the forest glows,  
I hear a noise of hymns.

Then by some secret shrine I ride;  
I hear a voice, but none are there;  
The stalls are void, the doors are  
wide, <sup>31</sup>

The tapers burning fair.  
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
And solemn chaunts resound be-  
tween.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
I find a magic bark.

I leap on board; no helmsman steers;  
I float till all is dark. <sup>40</sup>

A gentle sound, an awful light!  
Three angels bear the Holy Grail;  
With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail.

Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!  
My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
As down dark tides the glory slides,  
And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
Thro' dreaming towns I go, <sup>50</sup>  
The cock crows ere the Christmas  
morn,

The streets are dumb with snow.  
The tempest crackles on the leads,  
And, ringing, springs from brand  
and mail;

But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
And gilds the driving hail.  
I leave the plain, I climb the height;  
No branchy thicket shelter yields;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given 61  
 Such hope, I know not fear;  
 I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
 That often meet me here.  
 I muse on joy that will not cease,  
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
 Whose odors haunt my dreams;  
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
 This mortal armor that I wear, 70  
 This weight and size, this heart and  
 eyes,  
 Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest  
 air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
 And thro' the mountain-walls  
 A rolling organ-harmony  
 Swells up and shakes and falls.

Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear:  
 'O just and faithful knight of God!  
 Ride on! the prize is near.' 80  
 So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;  
 By bridge and ford, by park and  
 pale,  
 All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
 Until I find the Holy Grail.

### WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,  
 To which I most resort,  
 How goes the time? 'T is five o'clock  
 Go fetch a pint of port;



'Then by some secret shrine I ride;  
 I hear a voice, but none are there'

But let it not be such as that  
 You set before chance-comers,  
 But such whose father-grape grew fat  
 On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
 But may she still be kind, 10  
 And whisper lovely words, and use  
 Her influence on the mind,  
 To make me write my random rhymes,  
 Ere they be half-forgotten;  
 Nor add and alter, many times,  
 Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
 Her laurel in the wine,  
 And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
 These favor'd lips of mine; 20  
 Until the charm have power to make  
 New life-blood warm the bosom,  
 And barren commonplaces break  
 In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;  
 Her gradual fingers steal  
 And touch upon the master-chord  
 Of all I felt and feel.  
 Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
 And phantom hopes assemble; 30  
 And that child's heart within the man's  
 Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,  
 By many pleasant ways,  
 Against its fountain upward runs  
 The current of my days.  
 I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;  
 The gaslight wavers dimmer;  
 And softly, thro' a vinous mist,  
 My college friendships glimmer. 40

I grow in worth and wit and sense,  
 Unboding critic-pen,  
 Or that eternal want of pence  
 Which vexes public men,  
 Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
 For that which all deny them —  
 Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
 And all the world go by them.

Ah! yet, tho' all the world forsake,  
 Tho' fortune clip my wings, 50  
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
 Half-views of men and things.

Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;  
 There must be stormy weather;  
 But for some true result of good  
 All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;  
 If old things, there are new;  
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
 Yet glimpses of the true. 60  
 Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
 As on this whirligig of Time  
 We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid,  
 With fair horizons bound;  
 This whole wide earth of light and shade  
 Comes out a perfect round.  
 High over roaring Temple-bar,  
 And set in heaven's third story, 70  
 I look at all things as they are,  
 But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest  
 Half-mused, or reeling ripe,  
 The pint you brought me was the best  
 That ever came from pipe.  
 But tho' the port surpasses praise,  
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
 Is there some magic in the place?  
 Or do my peptics differ? 80

For since I came to live and learn,  
 No pint of white or red  
 Had ever half the power to turn  
 This wheel within my head,  
 Which bears a season'd brain about,  
 Unsubject to confusion,  
 Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,  
 Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
 With many kinsmen gay, 90  
 Where long and largely we carouse  
 As who shall say me nay?  
 Each month, a birthday coming on,  
 We drink, defying trouble,  
 Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
 And then we drank it double;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
 Had relish fiery-new,



' But whither would my fancy go ?  
How out of place she makes  
The violet of a legend blow  
Among the chops and steaks '

Or elbow-deep in sawdust slept,  
As old as Waterloo, <sup>100</sup>  
Or, stow'd when classic Canning  
died,  
In musty bins and chambers, .  
Had cast upon its crusty side  
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !  
She answer'd to my call ;  
She changes with that mood or this,  
Is all-in-all to all ;  
She lit the spark within my throat,  
To make my blood run quicker, <sup>110</sup>  
Used all her fiery will, and smote  
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
The waiter's hands, that reach  
To each his perfect pint of stout,  
His proper chop to each.

He looks not like the common breed  
That with the napkin dally ;  
I think he came, like Ganymede,  
From some delightful valley. <sup>120</sup>

The Cock was of a larger egg  
Than modern poultry drop,  
Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
And cramm'd a plumper crop,  
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
Crow'd lustier late and early,  
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,  
Till in a court he saw <sup>130</sup>  
A something-pottle-bodied boy  
That knuckled at the taw.  
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and  
good,  
Flew over roof and casement :

His brothers of the weather stood  
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe, and  
spire,  
And follow'd with acclaims,  
A sign to many a staring shire,  
Came crowing over Thames. <sup>140</sup>  
Right down by smoky Paul's they  
bore,  
Till, where the street grows straiter,  
One fix'd for ever at the door,  
And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?  
How out of place she makes  
The violet of a legend blow  
Among the chops and steaks !  
'T is but a steward of the can,  
One shade more plump than com-  
mon ; <sup>150</sup>  
As just and mere a serving-man  
As any born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me  
down  
Into the common day ?  
Is it the weight of that half-crown  
Which I shall have to pay ?  
For, something duller than at first,  
Nor wholly comfortable,  
I sit, my empty glass reversed,  
And thrumming on the table ; <sup>160</sup>

Half fearful that, with self at strife,  
I take myself to task,  
Lest of the fulness of my life  
I leave an empty flask ;  
For I had hope, by something rare,  
To prove myself a poet,  
But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,  
Till they be gather'd up ; <sup>170</sup>  
The truth, that flies the flowing can,  
Will haunt the vacant cup ;  
And others' follies teach us not,  
Nor much their wisdom teaches ;  
And most, of sterling worth, is what  
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !  
We know not what we know.

But for my pleasant hour, 't is gone ;  
'T is gone, and let it go. <sup>184</sup>  
'T is gone : a thousand such have  
slept

Away from my embraces,  
And fallen into the dusty crypt  
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went  
Long since, and came no more ;  
With peals of genial clamor sent  
From many a tavern-door,  
With twisted quirks and happy  
hits,  
From misty men of letters ; <sup>190</sup>  
The tavern-hours of mighty wits, —  
Thine elders and thy betters ;

Hours when the Poet's words and  
looks  
Had yet their native glow,  
Nor yet the fear of little books  
Had made him talk for show ;  
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
He flash'd his random speeches,  
Ere days that deal in ana swarm'd  
His literary leeches. <sup>200</sup>

So mix for ever with the past,  
Like all good things on earth !  
For should I prize thee, couldst thou  
last,  
At half thy real worth ?  
I hold it good, good things should  
pass ;  
With time I will not quarrel ;  
It is but yonder empty glass  
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
To which I most resort, <sup>210</sup>  
I too must part ; I hold thee dear  
For this good pint of port.  
For this, thou shalt from all things  
suck  
Marrow of mirth and laughter ;  
And wheresoe'er thou move, good  
luck  
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,  
The sphere thy fate allots ;  
Thy latter days increased with pence  
Go down among the pots ; <sup>220</sup>

Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
In haunts of hungry sinners,  
Old boxes, larded with the steam  
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our  
skins,  
Would quarrel with our lot;  
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,  
To serve the hot-and-hot;  
To come and go, and come again,  
Returning like the pewit, 230  
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
The thick-set hazel dies;  
Long, ere the hateful crow shall  
tread  
The corners of thine eyes;  
Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
Our changeful equinoxes,  
Till mellow Death, like some late  
guest,  
Shall call thee from the boxes. 240

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease  
To pace the gritted floor,  
And, laying down an unctuous lease  
Of life, shalt earn no more,  
No carved cross-bones, the types of  
Death,  
Shall show thee past to heaven,  
But carved cross-pipes, and, under-  
neath,  
A pint-pot neatly graven.

## LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,  
And clouds are highest up in air,  
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white  
doe  
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn;  
Lovers long-betroth'd were they;  
They two will wed the morrow morn—  
God's blessing on the day!

He does not love me for my birth,  
Nor for my lands so broad and  
fair; 10  
He loves me for my own true worth,  
And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
Said, 'Who was this that went from  
thee?'

'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare;  
'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O, God be thank'd,' said Alice the  
nurse,  
'That all comes round so just and  
fair!

Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
And you are *not* the Lady Clare.' 20

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse,  
my nurse,'  
Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so  
wild?'

'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,  
'I speak the truth: you are my child.

'The old earl's daughter died at my  
breast;  
I speak the truth, as I live by bread!  
I buried her like my own sweet child,  
And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done, 29  
O mother,' she said, 'if this be true,  
To keep the best man under the sun  
So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the  
nurse,  
'But keep the secret for your life,  
And all you have will be Lord Ro-  
nald's,  
When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,  
'I will speak out, for I dare not  
lie.  
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,  
And fling the diamond necklace  
by.' 40

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the  
nurse,  
'But keep the secret all ye can.'  
She said, 'Not so; but I will know  
If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice  
the nurse;  
'The man will cleave unto his right.'  
'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,  
'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!

Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee!' <sup>49</sup>

'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,  
'So strange it seems to me.

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,  
My mother dear, if this be so,  
And lay your hand upon my head,  
And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
She was no longer Lady Clare;  
She went by dale, and she went by  
down,  
With a single rose in her hair. <sup>60</sup>

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had  
brought  
Leapt up from where she lay,  
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,  
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his  
tower:  
'O Lady Clare, you shame your  
worth!  
Why come you drest like a village  
maid,  
That are the flower of the earth?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,  
I am but as my fortunes are; <sup>70</sup>  
I am a beggar born,' she said,  
'And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
'For I am yours in word and in deed.  
Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O, and proudly stood she up!  
Her heart within her did not fail;  
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,  
And told him all her nurse's tale. <sup>80</sup>

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn;  
He turn'd and kiss'd her where she  
stood;

'If you are not the heiress born,  
And I,' said he, 'the next in blood, —

'If you are not the heiress born,  
And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,  
We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
And you shall still be Lady Clare.'

## THE CAPTAIN

### A LEGEND OF THE NAVY

HE that only rules by terror  
Doeth grievous wrong.  
Deep as hell I count his error.  
Let him hear my song.  
Brave the Captain was; the seamen  
Made a gallant crew,  
Gallant sons of English freemen,  
Sailors bold and true.  
But they hated his oppression;  
Stern he was and rash, <sup>c</sup>  
So for every light transgression  
Doom'd them to the lash.  
Day by day more harsh and cruel  
Seem'd the Captain's mood.  
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel  
Burnt in each man's blood.  
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,  
Hoped to make the name  
Of his vessel great in story,  
Wheresoe'er he came. <sup>20</sup>  
So they past by capes and islands,  
Many a harbor-mouth,  
Sailing under palmy highlands  
Far within the South.  
On a day when they were going  
O'er the lone expanse,  
In the north, her canvas flowing,  
Rose a ship of France.  
Then the Captain's color heighten'd,  
Joyful came his speech; <sup>30</sup>  
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd  
In the eyes of each.  
'Chase,' he said; the ship flew forward,  
And the wind did blow;  
Stately, lightly, went she norward,  
Till she near'd the foe.  
Then they look'd at him they hated,  
Had what they desired;  
Mute with folded arms they waited —  
Not a gun was fired. <sup>40</sup>  
But they heard the foeman's thunder  
Roaring out their doom;  
All the air was torn in sunder,  
Crashing went the boom,  
Spars were splinter'd, decks were  
shatter'd,  
Bullets fell like rain;  
Over mast and deck were scatter'd  
Blood and brains of men.  
Spars were splinter'd; decks were  
broken;  
Every mother's son — <sup>50</sup>

Down they dropt—no word was  
spoken—

Each beside his gun.  
On the decks as they were lying,  
Were their faces grim.  
In their blood, as they lay dying,  
Did they smile on him.  
Those in whom he had reliance  
For his noble name  
With one smile of still defiance  
Sold him unto shame. 60  
Shame and wrath his heart confounded,  
Pale he turn'd and red,  
Till himself was deadly wounded  
Falling on the dead.  
Dismal error! fearful slaughter!  
Years have wander'd by;  
Side by side beneath the water  
Crew and Captain lie;  
There the sunlit ocean tosses  
O'er them mouldering, 70  
And the lonely seabird crosses  
With one waft of the wing.

## THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

In her ear he whispers gaily,  
'If my heart by signs can tell,  
Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,  
And I think thou lov'st me well.'  
She replies, in accents fainter,  
'There is none I love like thee.'  
He is but a landscape-painter,  
And a village maiden she.  
He to lips that fondly falter  
Presses his without reproof, 10  
Leads her to the village altar,  
And they leave her father's roof.  
'I can make no marriage present;  
Little can I give my wife.  
Love will make our cottage pleas-  
ant,  
And I love thee more than life.'  
They by parks and lodges going  
See the lordly castles stand;  
Summer woods, about them blowing,  
Made a murmur in the land. 20



“Bring the dress and put it on her,  
That she wore when she was wed”



From deep thought himself he rouses,  
 Says to her that loves him well,  
 'Let us see these handsome houses  
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'  
 So she goes by him attended,  
 Hears him lovingly converse,  
 Sees whatever fair and splendid  
 Lay betwixt his home and hers;  
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
 Parks and order'd gardens great, 30  
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
 Built for pleasure and for state.  
 All he shows her makes him dearer;  
 Evermore she seems to gaze  
 On that cottage growing nearer,  
 Where they twain will spend their  
 days.  
 O, but she will love him truly!  
 He shall have a cheerful home,  
 She will order all things duly,  
 When beneath his roof they come. 40  
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
 Till a gateway she discerns  
 With armorial bearings stately,  
 And beneath the gate she turns,  
 Sees a mansion more majestic  
 Than all those she saw before.  
 Many a gallant gay domestic  
 Bows before him at the door;  
 And they speak in gentle murmur.  
 When they answer to his call, 50  
 While he treads with footstep firmer,  
 Leading on from hall to hall.  
 And, while now she wonders blindly,  
 Nor the meaning can divine,  
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
 'All of this is mine and thine.'  
 Here he lives in state and bounty,  
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free;  
 Not a lord in all the county  
 Is so great a lord as he. 60  
 All at once the color flushes  
 Her sweet face from brow to  
 chin;  
 As it were with shame she blushes,  
 And her spirit changed within.  
 Then her countenance all over  
 Pale again as death did prove;  
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
 And he cheer'd her soul with  
 love.  
 So she strove against her weakness,  
 Tho' at times her spirit sank, 70  
 Shaped her heart with woman's meek-  
 ness  
 To all duties of her rank;

And a gentle consort made he,  
 And her gentle mind was such  
 That she grew a noble lady,  
 And the people loved her much.  
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
 With the burthen of an honor  
 Unto which she was not born. 80  
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
 And she murmur'd, 'O, that he  
 Were once more that landscape-painter  
 Which did win my heart from  
 me!'  
 So she droop'd and droop'd before  
 him,  
 Fading slowly from his side;  
 Three fair children first she bore  
 him,  
 Then before her time she died.  
 Weeping, weeping late and early,  
 Walking up and pacing down, 90  
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,  
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.  
 And he came to look upon her,  
 And he look'd at her and said,  
 'Bring the dress and put it on her,  
 That she wore when she was wed.'  
 Then her people, softly treading,  
 Bore to earth her body, drest  
 In the dress that she was wed in,  
 That her spirit might have rest. 100

## THE VOYAGE

### I

We left behind the painted buoy  
 That tosses at the harbor-mouth;  
 And madly danced our hearts with joy,  
 As fast we fled to the south.  
 How fresh was every sight and sound  
 On open main or winding shore!  
 We knew the merry world was round,  
 And we might sail for evermore.

### II

Warm broke the breeze against the  
 ' brow,  
 Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail; 10  
 The Lady's-head upon the prow  
 Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd  
 the gale.  
 The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,  
 And swept behind; so quick the run,  
 We felt the good ship shake and reel,  
 We seem'd to sail into the sun.

## III

How oft we saw the sun retire,  
 And burn the threshold of the night,  
 Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
 And sleep beneath his pillar'd light !  
 How oft the purple-skirted robe <sup>21</sup>  
 Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
 As thro' the slumber of the globe  
 Again we dash'd into the dawn !

## IV

New stars all night above the brim  
 Of waters lighten'd into view ;  
 They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
 Changed every moment as we flew.  
 Far ran the naked moon across  
 The houseless ocean's heaving field,  
 Or flying shone, the silver boss <sup>31</sup>  
 Of her own halo's dusky shield.

## V

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
 High towns on hills were dimly  
 seen ;  
 We past long lines of Northern capes  
 And dewy Northern meadows green.  
 We came to warmer waves, and deep  
 Across the boundless east we drove,  
 Where those long swells of breaker  
 sweep <sup>39</sup>  
 The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

## VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
 Gloom'd the low coast and quivering  
 brine  
 With ashy rains, that spreading made  
 Fantastic plume or sable pine ;  
 By sands and steaming flats, and floods  
 Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,  
 And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
 Glow'd for a moment as we past.

## VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
 How swiftly stream'd ye by the  
 bark ! <sup>50</sup>  
 At times the whole sea burn'd, at  
 times  
 With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;  
 At times a carven craft would shoot  
 From havens hid in fairy bowers,  
 With naked limbs and flowers and  
 fruit,  
 But we nor paused for fruit nor  
 flowers.

## VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled  
 Down the waste waters day and  
 night,  
 And still we follow'd where she led,  
 In hope to gain upon her flight. <sup>60</sup>  
 Her face was evermore unseen,  
 And fixt upon the far sea-line ;  
 But each man murmur'd, ' O my  
 Queen,  
 I follow till I make thee mine.'

## IX

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
 Like Fancy made of golden air,  
 Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
 Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge  
 fair,  
 Now high on waves that idly burst  
 Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the  
 sea, <sup>70</sup>  
 And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
 She bore the blade of Liberty.

## X

And only one among us — him  
 We pleas'd not — he was seldom  
 pleas'd ;  
 He saw not far, his eyes were dim,  
 But ours he swore were all diseased.  
 ' A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,  
 ' A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and wept.  
 And overboard one stormy night  
 He cast his body, and on we swept.

## XI

And never sail of ours was furl'd, <sup>81</sup>  
 Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;  
 We loved the glories of the world,  
 But laws of nature were our scorn.  
 For blasts would rise and rave and  
 cease,  
 But whence were those that drove  
 the sail  
 Across the whirlwind's heart of peace.  
 And to and thro' the counter gale ?

## XII

Again to colder climes we came,  
 For still we follow'd where she led ; <sup>90</sup>  
 Now mate is blind and captain lame,  
 And half the crew are sick or dead,  
 But, blind or lame or sick or sound,  
 We follow that which flies before ;  
 We know the merry world is round,  
 And we may sail for evermore.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN  
GUINEVERE

## A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
With tears and smiles from heaven  
again

The maiden Spring upon the plain  
Came in a sunlit fall of rain.

In crystal vapor everywhere  
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,  
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,  
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green  
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song;  
Sometimes the throstle whistled  
strong;

Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd  
along,  
Hush'd all the groves from fear of  
wrong;

By grassy capes with fuller sound  
In curves the yellowing river ran.  
And drooping chestnut-buds began  
To spread into the perfect fan,  
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
Rode thro' the covert of the deer,  
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous  
Spring;

A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
Buckled with golden clasps before;  
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
Now by some tinkling rivulet,  
In mosses mixt with violet  
Her cream-white mule his pastern  
set;

And fleetest now she skimm'd the  
plains

Than she whose elfin prancer springs  
By night to cery warblings,  
When all the glimmering moorland  
rings

With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade  
The happy winds upon her play'd,  
Blowing the ringlet from the braid.

She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd  
The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
A man had given all other bliss,  
And all his worldly worth for this,  
To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
Upon her perfect lips.

## A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
Thy tribute wave deliver;  
No more by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
A rivulet, then a river;  
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,  
And here thine aspen shiver;  
And here by thee will hum the bee,  
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
A thousand moons will quiver;  
But not by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

## THE EAGLE

## FRAGMENT

He clasps the crag with crooked  
hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world, he  
stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

'MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY  
EARTH'

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave  
Yon orange sunset waning slow;  
From fringes of the faded eve,  
O happy planet, eastward go,  
Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
To glass herself in dewy eyes  
That watch me from the glen below.



'In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
To meet and greet her on her way'

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly  
borne,  
Dip forward under starry light,  
And move me to my marriage-morn,  
And round again to happy night.

### THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid ;  
She was more fair than words can  
say ;  
Barefooted came the beggar maid  
Before the king Cophetua.  
In robe and crown the king stepped  
down,  
To meet and greet her on her way ;  
It is no wonder,' said the lords,  
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
She in her poor attire was seen ;  
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,  
One her dark hair and lovesome  
mien.  
So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
In all that land had never been.  
Cophetua sware a royal oath :  
'This beggar maid shall be my  
queen !'

### 'COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD'

COME not, when I am dead,  
To drop thy foolish tears upon my  
grave,  
To trample round my fallen head,  
And vex the unhappy dust thou  
wouldst not save.

There let the wind sweep and the  
plover cry ;  
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy  
crime

I care no longer, being all unblest :  
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick  
of time,

And I desire to rest.  
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me  
where I lie ;  
Go by, go by.

### THE LETTERS

#### I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,  
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant  
air ;

I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
And saw the altar cold and bare.  
A clog of lead was round my feet,  
A band of pain across my brow ;  
'Cold altar, heaven and earth shall  
meet  
Before you hear my marriage vow.'

#### II

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song  
That mock'd the wholesome human  
heart,  
And then we met in wrath and wrong,  
We met, but only meant to part.  
Full cold my greeting was and dry ;  
She faintly smiled, she hardly  
moved ;  
I saw with half-unconscious eye  
She wore the colors I approved.

#### III

She took the little ivory chest,  
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,  
Then raised her head with lips com-  
prest,  
And gave my letters back to me ;  
And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
My gifts, when gifts of mine could  
please.  
As looks a father on the things  
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

#### IV

She told me all her friends had said ;  
I rag'd against the public liar ;

She talk'd as if her love were dead,  
But in my words were seeds of  
fire.

'No more of love, your sex is known ;  
I never will be twice deceived.  
Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
The woman cannot be believed.

#### V

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of  
hell, —

And women's slander is the worst, —  
And you, whom once I loved so well,  
'Thro' you my life will be accurst.'  
I spoke with heart and heat and force,  
I shook her breast with vague  
alarms —

Like torrents from a mountain source  
We rush'd into each other's arms.

#### VI

We parted ; sweetly gleam'd the stars,  
And sweet the vapor-braided blue ;  
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
As homeward by the church I drew.  
The very graves appear'd to smile,  
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells ;  
'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,  
There comes a sound of marriage  
bells.'

### THE VISION OF SIN

#### I

I HAD a vision when the night was  
late ;  
A youth came riding toward a palace-  
gate.  
He rode a horse with wings, that  
would have flown,  
But that his heavy rider kept him  
down.  
And from the palace came a child of  
sin,  
And took him by the curls, and led  
him in,  
Where sat a company with heated  
eyes,  
Expecting when a fountain should  
arise.  
A sleepy light upon their brows and  
lips —  
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,  
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles  
and capes —

Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid  
 shapes,  
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine,  
 and piles of grapes.

## II

Then methought I heard a mellow  
 sound,  
 Gathering up from all the lower  
 ground;  
 Narrowing in to where they sat as-  
 sembled,  
 Low voluptuous music winding trem-  
 bled,  
 Woven in circles. They that heard it  
 sigh'd,  
 Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,  
 Swung themselves, and in low tones  
 replied;  
 Till the fountain spouted, showering  
 wide  
 Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail.  
 Then the music touch'd the gates and  
 died,  
 Rose again from where it seem'd to  
 fail,  
 Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing  
 gale;  
 Till thronging in and in, to where  
 they waited,  
 As 't were a hundred-throated night-  
 ingale,  
 The strong tempestuous treble throb'd  
 and palpitated;  
 Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
 Caught the sparkles, and in circles,  
 Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid  
 mazes,  
 Flung the torrent rainbow round.  
 Then they started from their places,  
 Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
 Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
 Half-invisible to the view,  
 Wheeling with precipitate paces  
 To the melody, till they flew,  
 Hair and eyes and limbs and faces,  
 Twisted hard in fierce embraces,  
 Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
 Dash'd together in blinding dew;  
 Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,  
 The nerve-dissolving melody  
 Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

## III

And then I look'd up toward a moun-  
 tain-tract,

That girt the region with high cliff  
 and lawn.

I saw that every morning, far with-  
 drawn

Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
 God made Himself an awful rose of  
 dawn,

Unheeded; and detaching, fold by  
 fold,

From those still heights, and, slowly  
 drawing near,

A vapor heavy, hueless, formless  
 cold,

Came floating on for many a month  
 and year,

Unheeded; and I thought I would  
 have spoken,

And warn'd that madman ere it grew  
 too late,

But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine  
 was broken,

When that cold vapor touch'd the  
 palace-gate,

And link'd again. I saw within my  
 head

A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean  
 as death,

Who slowly rode across a wither'd  
 heath,

And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

## IV

'Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!

Here is custom come your way;

Take my brute, and lead him in,

Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

'Bitter barmaid, waning fast!

See that sheets are on my bed.

What! the flower of life is past;

It is long before you wed.

'Slipshod waiter, lank and sour,

At the Dragon on the heath!

Let us have a quiet hour,

Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

'I am old, but let me drink;

Bring me spices, bring me wine;

I remember, when I think,

That my youth was half divine.

'Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,

When a blanket wraps the day,

When the rotten woodland drips,

And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

'Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee;  
What care I for any name?  
What for order or degree?

'Let me screw thee up a peg;  
Let me loose thy tongue with wine;  
Callest thou that thing a leg?  
Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

'Thou shalt not be saved by works, 91  
Thou hast been a sinner too;  
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,  
Empty scarecrows, I and you!

'Fill the cup and fill the can,  
Have a rouse before the morn;  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

'We are men of ruin'd blood;  
Therefore comes it we are wise. 100  
Fish are we that love the mud,  
Rising to no fancy-flies.

'Name and fame! to fly sublime  
Thro' the courts, the camps, the  
schools,  
Is to be the ball of Time,  
Banded by the hands of fools.

'Friendship!—to be two in one—  
Let the canting liar pack!  
Well I know, when I am gone,  
How she mouths behind my back.

'Virtue!—to be good and just— 111  
Every heart, when sifted well,  
Is a clot of warmer dust,  
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

'O, we two as well can look  
Whited thought and cleanly life  
As the priest, above his book  
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

'Fill the cup and fill the can,  
Have a rouse before the morn: 120  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

'Drink, and let the parties rave;  
They are fill'd with idle spleen,  
Rising, falling, like a wave,  
For they know not what they mean.

'He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant's power,  
And the tyrant's cruel glee  
Forces on the freer hour. 130

'Fill the can and fill the cup;  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

'Greet her with applausive breath,  
Freedom, gaily doth she tread;  
In her right a civic wreath,  
In her left a human head.

'No, I love not what is new;  
She is of an ancient house, 140  
And I think we know the hue  
Of that cap upon her brows.

'Let her go! her thirst she slakes  
Where the bloody conduit runs,  
Then her sweetest meal she makes  
On the first-born of her sons.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool,—  
Visions of a perfect State;  
Drink we, last, the public fool,  
Frantic love and frantic hate. 150

'Chant me now some wicked stave,  
Till thy drooping courage rise,  
And the glow-worm of the grave  
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

'Fear not thou to loose thy tongue,  
Set thy hoary fancies free;  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savors well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,  
When thy nerves could under-  
stand 160  
What there is in loving tears,  
And the warmth of hand in hand.

'Tell me tales of thy first love—  
April hopes, the fools of chance—  
Till the graves begin to move,  
And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can and fill the cup;  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again. 170

'Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chap-fallen circle spreads —  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads !'

'You are bones, and what of that ?  
Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex !  
Tread a measure on the stones, 180  
Madam — if I know your sex  
From the fashion of your bones.

'No, I cannot praise the fire  
In your eye — nor yet your lip ;  
All the more do I admire  
Joints of cunning workmanship.

'Lo ! God's likeness — the ground-  
plan —  
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor  
framed ;

Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
Far too naked to be shamed ! 190

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,  
While we keep a little breath !  
Drink to heavy Ignorance !  
Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

'Thou art mazed, the night is long,  
And the longer night is near —  
What ! I am not all as wrong  
As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
When the locks are crisp and curl'd ;  
Unto me my maudlin gall 201  
And my mockeries of the world.

'Fill the cup and fill the can ;  
Mingle madness, mingle scorn !  
Dregs of life, and lees of man ;  
Yet we will not die forlorn.'

## V

The voice grew faint ; there came a  
further change ;  
Once more uprose the mystic moun-  
tain-range.  
Below were men and horses pierced  
with worms,  
And slowly quickening into lower  
forms, 210

By shards and scurf of salt, and scum  
of dross,  
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd  
with moss.

Then some one spake : 'Behold ! it  
was a crime  
Of sense avenged by sense that wore  
with time.'

Another said : 'The crime of sense be-  
came  
The crime of malice, and is equal  
blame.'

And one : 'He had not wholly quench'd  
his power ;  
A little grain of conscience made him  
sour.'

At last I heard a voice upon the  
slope

Cry to the summit, 'Is there any  
hope ?' 220

To which an answer peal'd from that  
high land,

But in a tongue no man could under-  
stand ;

And on the glimmering limit far with-  
drawn

God made Himself an awful rose of  
dawn.

## TO —

## AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

'Cursed be he that moves my bones.'  
*Shakespeare's Epitaph.*

You might have won the Poet's  
name,

If such be worth the winning  
now,

And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
A life that moves to gracious  
ends

Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
A deedful life, a silent voice.

And you have miss'd the irreverent  
doom

Of those that wear the Poet's  
crown ;

Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.





'Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!'

For now the Poet cannot die,  
Nor leave his music as of old,  
But round him ere he scarce be  
cold  
Begins the scandal and the cry:

'Proclaim the faults he would not  
show;  
Break lock and seal, betray the  
trust;  
Keep nothing sacred, 'tis but just  
The many-headed beast should know.'

Ah, shameless! for he did but sing  
A song that pleased us from its  
worth;  
No public life was his on earth,  
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best;  
His worst he kept, his best he  
gave.  
My Shakespeare's curse on clown  
and knave  
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to  
be  
The little life of bank and brier,  
The bird that pipes his lone de-  
sire  
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud  
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
For whom the carrion vulture waits  
To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN  
GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
The long divine Peneian pass,  
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
With such a pencil, such a pen,  
You shadow forth to distant men,  
I read and felt that I was there.

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
And track'd you still on classic  
ground,

I grew in gladness till I found  
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
And glisten'd — here and there alone  
The broad-limb'd Gods at random  
thrown

By fountain-urns; — and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
Of cavern pillars; on the swell  
The silver lily heaved and fell;  
And many a slope was rich in bloom,

From him that on the mountain lea  
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks  
To him who sat upon the rocks  
And fluted to the morning sea.

## 'BREAK, BREAK, BREAK'

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!  
And I would that my tongue could  
utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at  
play!

O, well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the  
bay!

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill;  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd  
hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is  
still!

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!  
But the tender grace of a day that is  
dead  
Will never come back to me.

## THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He pass'd by the town and out of  
the street;

A light wind blew from the gates of  
the sun,

And waves of shadow went over the  
wheat;

And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
And chanted a melody loud and  
sweet,

That made the wild-swan pause in her  
cloud,

And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the  
fly,

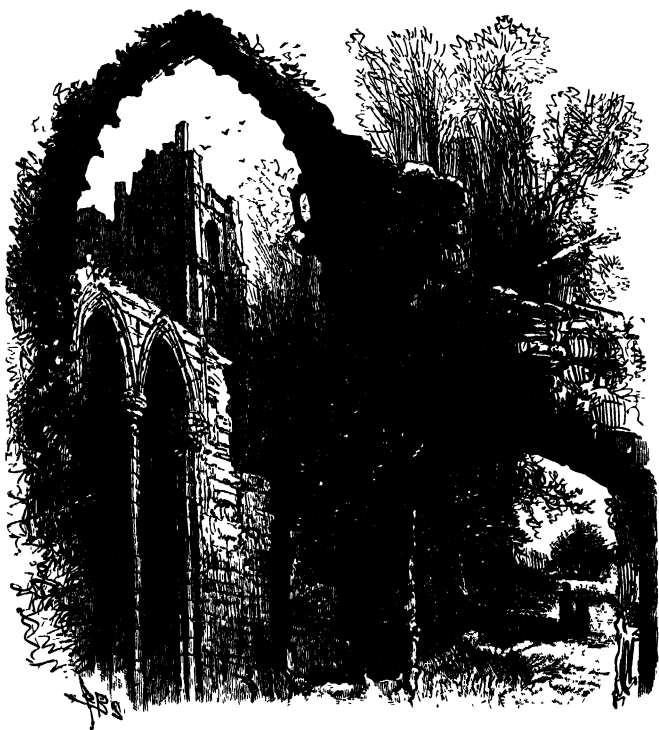
The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down  
on his beak,

And stared, with his foot on the  
prey;

And the nightingale thought, 'I have  
sung many songs,

But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will  
be

When the years have died away.'



' The Abbey-ruin in the park '

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

### PROLOGUE

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's  
 day  
 Gave his broad lawns until the set of  
 sun  
 Up to the people; thither flock'd at  
 noon  
 His tenants, wife and child, and thither  
 half  
 The neighboring borough with their  
 Institute,  
 Of which he was the patron. I was  
 there  
 From college, visiting the son, — the  
 son

A Walter too, — with others of our set,  
 Five others; we were seven at Vivian-  
 place.

And me that morning Walter show'd  
 the house,  
 Greek, set with busts. From vases in<sup>10</sup>  
 the hall  
 Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier  
 than their names,  
 Grew side by side; and on the pave-  
 ment lay  
 Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the  
 park,  
 Huge Ammonites, and the first bones  
 of Time;

And on the tables every clime and age  
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,  
Claymore and snow-shoe, toys in lava,  
fans

Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
Laborious orient ivory sphere in  
sphere, 20

The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-  
clubs

From the isles of palm; and higher on  
the walls,

Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk  
and deer,

His own forefathers' arms and armor  
hung.

And 'this,' he said, 'was Hugh's at  
Agin-court;

And that was old Sir Ralph's at Asca-  
lon.

A good knight he! we keep a chronicle  
With all about him,'—which he  
brought, and I

Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt  
with knights

Half-legend, half-historic, counts and  
kings 30

Who laid about them at their wills  
and died;

And mixt with these a lady, one that  
arm'd

Her cwn fair head, and sallying thro'  
the gate,

Had beat her foes with slaughter from  
her walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the  
book,

'O noble heart who, being strait-be-  
sieged

By this wild king to force her to his  
wish,

Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a sol-  
dier's death,

But now when all was lost or seem'd  
as lost—

Her stature more than mortal in the  
burst 40

Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on  
fire—

Brake with a blast of trumpets from  
the gate,

And, falling on them like a thunder-  
bolt,

She trampled some beneath her horses'  
heels,

And some were whelm'd with missiles  
of the wall,

And some were push'd with lances  
from the rock,

And part were drown'd within the  
whirling brook;

O miracle of noble womanhood!

So sang the gallant glorious chroni-  
cle;

And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he  
said, 50

'To the Abbey; there is Aunt Eliza-  
beth

And sister Lilia with the rest.' We  
went—

I kept the book and had my finger in  
it—

Down thro' the park. Strange was the  
sight to me;

For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,  
sown

With happy faces and with holiday.  
There moved the multitude, a thou-  
sand heads;

The patient leaders of their Institute  
Taught them with facts. One rear'd  
a font of stone

And drew, from butts of water on the  
slope, 60

The fountain of the moment, playing,  
now

A twisted snake, and now a rain of  
pearls,

Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded  
ball

Danced like a wisp; and somewhat  
lower down

A man with knobs and wires and vials  
fired

A cannon; Echo answer'd in her  
sleep

From hollow fields; and here were  
telescopes

For azure views; and there a group  
of girls

In circle waited, whom the electric  
shock

Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter;  
round the lake 70

A little clock-work steamer paddling  
plied

And shook the lilies; perch'd about  
the knolls

A dozen angry models jetted steam;  
A petty railway ran; a fire-balloon

Rose gem-like up before the dusky  
groves  
And dropt a fairy parachute and past ;  
And there thro' twenty posts of tele-  
graph  
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
Between the mimic stations ; so that  
sport  
Went hand in hand with science ;  
otherwhere <sup>80</sup>  
Pure sport ; a herd of boys with clamor  
bowl'd  
And stump'd the wicket ; babies roll'd  
about  
Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men  
and maids  
Arranged a country dance, and flew  
thro' light  
And shadow, while the twangling  
violin  
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and  
overhead  
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty  
lime  
Made noise with bees and breeze from  
end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking  
of the time ;  
And long we gazed, but satiated at  
length <sup>90</sup>  
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and  
ivy-claspt,  
Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,  
Thro' one wide chasm of time and  
frost they gave  
The park, the crowd, the house ; but  
all within  
The sward was trim as any garden  
lawn.  
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
And Lilia with the rest, and lady  
friends  
From neighbor seats ; and there was  
Ralph himself,  
A broken statue propt against the  
wall,  
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with  
sport, <sup>100</sup>  
Half child, half woman as she was,  
had wound  
A scarf of orange round the stony  
helm,  
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
That made the old warrior from his  
ivied nook

Glow like a sunbeam. Near his tomb  
a feast  
Shone, silver-set ; about it lay the  
guests,  
And there we join'd them ; then the  
maiden aunt  
Took this fair day for text, and from  
it preach'd  
An universal culture for the crowd,  
And all things great. But we, un-  
worthier, told <sup>110</sup>  
Of college : he had climb'd across the  
spikes,  
And he had squeezed himself betwixt  
the bars,  
And he had breathed the Proctor's  
dogs ; and one  
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to com-  
mon men,  
But honeying at the whisper of a  
lord ;  
And one the Master, as a rogue in  
grain  
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their  
heads I saw  
The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which  
brought  
My book to mind, and opening this I  
read <sup>120</sup>  
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that  
rang  
With tilt and tourney ; then the tale  
of her  
That drove her foes with slaughter  
from her walls,  
And much I praised her nobleness,  
and 'Where,'  
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head —  
she lay  
Beside him — 'lives there such a wo-  
man now ?'

Quick answer'd Lilia : 'There are  
thousands now  
Such women, but convention beats  
them down ;  
It is but bringing up ; no more than  
that.  
You men have done it — how I hate  
you all ! <sup>130</sup>  
Ah, were I something great ! I wish  
I were  
Some mighty poetess, I would shame  
you then,

That love to keep us children! O, I wish  
That I were some great princess, I would build  
Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are taught;  
We are twice as quick!' And here she shook aside  
The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling: 'Pretty were the sight  
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt <sup>140</sup>  
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,  
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.  
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,  
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph  
Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,  
If there were many Lilies in the brood,  
However deep you might embower the nest,  
Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sward  
She tapt her tiny silken-sandall'd foot:  
'That's your light way; but I would make it death <sup>150</sup>  
For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd;  
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
And sweet as English air could make her, she!  
But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,  
And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful Puss,'  
And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,  
All else was well, for she-society.  
They boated and they cricketed; they talk'd  
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;  
They lost their weeks; they vex'd the souls of deans; <sup>161</sup>  
They rode; they betted; made a hundred friends,

And caught the blossom of the flying terms,  
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,  
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,  
Part banter, part affection.  
'True,' she said,  
'We doubt not that. O, yes, you miss'd us much!  
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you'd d.'

She held it out; and as a parrot turns <sup>169</sup>  
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
And takes a lady's finger with all care,  
And bites it for true heart and not for harm,  
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd  
And wrung it. 'Doubt my word again!' he said.  
'Come, listen! here is proof that you were miss'd:  
We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read;  
And there we took one tuto. as to read.  
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square  
Were out of season; never man, I think,  
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he; <sup>180</sup>  
For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,  
And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,  
We did but talk you over, pledge you all  
In wassail; often, like as many girls—  
Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—  
As many little trifling Lilies—play'd Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,  
And *what's my thought* and *when and where and how*,  
And often told a tale from mouth to mouth  
As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that;  
A pleasant game, she thought. She liked it more <sup>191</sup>  
Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.

But these — what kind of tales did  
men tell men,  
She wonder'd, by themselves ?

A half-disdain  
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her  
lips ;

And Walter nodded at me : ' *He* began,  
The rest would follow, each in turn :  
and so

We forged a sevenfold story. Kind ?  
what kind ?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas sole-  
cisms ;

Seven-headed monsters only made to  
kill 200

Time by the fire in winter.'

' Kill him now,  
The tyrant ! kill him in the summer  
too.'

Said Lilia ; ' Why not now ? ' the  
maiden aunt.

' Why not a summer's as a winter's  
tale ?

A tale for summer as befits the time,  
And something it should be to suit the  
place,

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
Grave, solemn !'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this  
To something so mock-solemn, that I  
laugh'd,

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling  
mirth 210

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker  
Hid in the ruins ; till the maiden  
aunt—

A little sense of wrong had touch'd  
her face

With color—turn'd to me with ' As  
you will ;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

' Take Lilia, then, for heroine,'  
clamor'd he,

' And make her some great princess,  
six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal ; and be you 219  
The prince to win her !'

' Then follow me, the prince,'  
I answer'd, ' each be hero in his turn !  
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a  
dream. —

Heroic seems our princess as required—  
But something made to suit with time  
and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,  
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,  
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
And, yonder, shrieks and strange ex-  
periments

For which the good Sir Ralph had  
burnt them all —

This *were* a medley ! we should have  
him back

Who told the " Winter's Tale " to do  
it for us. 230

No matter ; we will say whatever  
comes.

And let the ladies sing us, if they will,  
From time to time, some ballad or  
a song

To give us breathing-space.'

So I began,  
And the rest follow'd ; and the women  
sang

Between the rougher voices of the men,  
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind :

And here I give the story and the  
songs.

# I

A Prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in  
face,

Of temper amorous as the first of May,  
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a  
girl,

For on my cradle shone the Northern  
star.

There lived an ancient legend in our  
house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grand-  
sire burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had fore-  
told,

Dying, that none of all our blood  
should know

The shadow from the substance, and  
that one

Should come to fight with shadows  
and to fall ; 10

For so, my mother said, the story ran.  
And, truly, waking dreams were, more  
or less,

An old and strange affection of the  
house.

Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven  
knows what !

On a sudden in the midst of men and  
day,

And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,  
 I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,  
 And feel myself the shadow of a dream.  
 Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,  
 And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd 'catalepsy.'<sup>20</sup>  
 My mother pitying made a thousand prayers.  
 My mother was as mild as any saint,  
 Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,  
 So gracious was her tact and tenderness;  
 But my good father thought a king a king.  
 He cared not for the affection of the house;  
 He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand  
 To lash offence, and with long arms and hands  
 Reach'd out and pick'd offenders from the mass  
 For judgment.  
 Now it chanced that I had been,  
 While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd<sup>31</sup>  
 To one, a neighboring Princess. She to me  
 Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf  
 At eight years old; and still from time to time  
 Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,  
 And of her brethren, youths of puissance;  
 And still I wore her picture by my heart,  
 And one dark tress; and all around them both  
 Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,<sup>40</sup>  
 My father sent ambassadors with furs  
 And jewels, gifts, to fetch her. These brought back  
 A present, a great labor of the loom;  
 And therewithal an answer vague as wind.  
 Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;

He said there was a compact; that was true;  
 But then she had a will; was he to blame?  
 And maiden fancies; loved to live alone  
 Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room  
 I stood<sup>50</sup>  
 With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:  
 The first, a gentleman of broken means —  
 His father's fault — but given to starts and bursts  
 Of revel; and the last, my other heart,  
 And almost my half-self, for still we moved  
 Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face  
 Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,  
 Inflamed with wrath. He started on his feet,  
 Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent<sup>60</sup>  
 The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof  
 From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware  
 That he would send a hundred thousand men,  
 And bring her in a whirlwind; then he chew'd  
 The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,  
 Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke: 'My father, let me go.  
 It cannot be but some gross error lies  
 In this report, this answer of a king  
 Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable;<sup>70</sup>  
 Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,  
 Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,  
 May rue the bargain made.' And Florian said:



'I have a sister at the foreign court,  
 Who moves about the Princess; she,  
     you know,  
 Who wedded with a nobleman from  
 thence.  
 He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
 The lady of three castles in that  
 land;  
 Thro' her this matter might be sifted  
 clean.'  
 And Cyril whisper'd: 'Take me with  
 you too.'<sup>80</sup>  
 Then laughing, 'What if these weird  
 seizures come  
 Upon you in those lands, and no one  
 near  
 To point you out the shadow from the  
 truth!  
 Take me; I'll serve you better in a  
 strait;  
 I grate on rusty hinges here.' But  
 'No!'  
 Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not;  
 we ourself  
 Will crush her pretty maiden fancies  
 dead  
 In iron gauntlets; break the council  
 up.'

But when the council broke, I rose  
 and past  
 Thro' the wild woods that hung about  
 the town;<sup>90</sup>  
 Found a still place, and pluck'd her  
 likeness out;  
 Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it  
 lying bathed  
 In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd  
 trees.  
 What were those fancies? wherefore  
 break her troth?  
 Proud look'd the lips; but while I  
 meditated  
 A wind arose and rush'd upon the  
 South,  
 And shook the songs, the whispers, and  
 the shrieks  
 Of the wild woods together, and a  
 Voice  
 Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou  
 shalt win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that  
 month<sup>100</sup>  
 Became her golden shield, I stole from  
 court

With Cyril and with Florian, unper-  
 ceived,  
 Cat-footed thro' the town and half in  
 dread  
 To hear my father's clamor at our  
 backs  
 With 'Ho!' from some bay-window  
 shake the night;  
 But all was quiet. From the bastion'd  
 walls  
 Like threaded spiders, one by one, we  
 dropt,  
 And flying reach'd the frontier; then  
 we crost  
 To a livelier land; and so by tilth and  
 grange,  
 And vines, and blowing bosks of wil-  
 derness,<sup>110</sup>  
 We gain'd the mother-city thick with  
 towers,  
 And in the imperial palace found the  
 king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and  
 small his voice,  
 But bland the smile that like a wrin-  
 kling wind  
 On glassy water drove his cheek in  
 lines;  
 A little dry old man, without a star,  
 Not like a king. Three days he  
 feasted us,  
 And on the fourth I spake of why we  
 came,  
 And my betroth'd. 'You do us, Prince,'  
 he said,  
 Airing a snowy hand and signet  
 gem,<sup>120</sup>  
 'All honor. We remember love our-  
 self  
 In our sweet youth. There did a com-  
 pact pass  
 Long summers back, a kind of cere-  
 mony—  
 I think the year in which our olives  
 fail'd.  
 I would you had her, Prince, with all  
 my heart,  
 With my full heart; but there were  
 widows here,  
 Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady  
 Blanche;  
 They fed her theories, in and out of  
 place  
 Maintaining that with equal hus-  
 bandry



'Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve'

The woman were an equal to the man.  
 They harp'd on this; with this our  
     banquets rang; <sup>131</sup>  
 Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots  
     of talk;  
 Nothing but this; my very ears were  
     hot  
 To hear them. Knowledge, so my  
     daughter held,  
 Was all in all; they had but been, she  
     thought,  
 As children; they must lose the child,  
     assume  
 The woman. Then, sir, awful odes  
     she wrote,  
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated  
     of,  
 But all she is and does is awful; odes  
 About this losing of the child; and  
     rhymes <sup>140</sup>  
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying echange  
 Beyond all reason. These the women  
     sang;

And they that know such things — I  
     sought but peace;  
 No critic I — would call them master-  
     pieces.  
 They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd  
     a boon,  
 A certain summer-palace which I have  
 Hard by your father's frontier. I said  
     no,  
 Yet being an easy man, gave it; and  
     there,  
 All wild to found an University  
 For maidens, on the spur she fled; and  
     more <sup>150</sup>  
 We know not, — only this: they see no  
     men,  
 Not even her brother Arac, nor the  
     twins  
 Her brethren, tho' they love her, look  
     upon her  
 As on a kind of paragon; and I —  
 Pardon me saying it — were much loth  
     to breed

Dispute betwixt myself and mine ; but  
since —

And I confess with right -- you think  
me bound

In some sort, I can give you letters to  
her ;

And yet, to speak the truth, I rate  
your chance

Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king ;  
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to  
slur <sup>161</sup>

With garrulous ease and oily courtesies  
Our formal compact, yet, not less —  
all frets

But chafing me on fire to find my  
bride —

Went forth again with both my friends.  
We rode

Many a long league back to the North.  
At last

From hills that look'd across a land of  
hope

We dropt with evening on a rustic  
town

Set in a gleaming river's crescent-  
curve,

Close at the boundary of the liberties ;  
There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd  
mine host <sup>171</sup>

To council, plied him with his richest  
wines,

And show'd the late-writ letters of the  
king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared  
As blank as death in marble ; then  
exclaim'd,

Averring it was clear against all rules  
For any man to go ; but as his brain  
Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he  
said,

'Had given us letters, was he bound  
to speak ?

The king would bear him out ;' and at  
the last — <sup>180</sup>

The summer of the vine in all his  
veins —

'No doubt that we might make it  
worth his while.

She once had past that way ; he heard  
her speak ;

She scared him ; life ! he never saw  
the like ;

She look'd as grand as doomsday and  
as grave !

And he, he revered his liege-lady  
there ;

He always made a point to post with  
mares ;

His daughter and his housemaid were  
the boys ;

The land, he understood, for miles  
about

Was till'd by women ; all the swine  
were sows, <sup>196</sup>

And all the dogs' —

But while he jested thus,  
A thought flash'd thro' me which I  
clothed in act,

Remembering how we three presented  
Maid,

Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of  
feast,

In masque or pageant at my father's  
court.

We sent mine host to purchase female  
gear ;

He brought it, and himself, a sight to  
shake

The midriff of despair with laughter,  
hold

To lace us up, till each in maiden  
plumes

We rustled ; him we gave a costly  
bribe <sup>200</sup>

To guerdon silence, mounted our good  
steeds,

And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,  
And rode till midnight, when the col-  
lege lights

Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
And linden alley ; then we past an  
arch,

Whereon a woman-statue rose with  
wings

From four wing'd horses dark against  
the stars,

And some inscription ran along the  
front,

But deep in shadow. Further on we  
gain'd <sup>210</sup>

A little street half garden and half  
house,

But scarce could hear each other speak  
for noise

Of clocks and chimes, like silver ham-  
mers falling

On silver anvils, and the splash and  
stir

Of fountains spouted up and shower-  
ing down  
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose ;  
And all about us peal'd the nightin-  
gale,  
Rapt in her song and careless of the  
snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a  
sign,  
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like  
Heaven and Earth <sup>220</sup>  
With constellation and with continent,  
Above an entry. Riding in, we call'd ;  
A plump-arm'd ostleress and a stable  
wench  
Came running at the call, and help'd  
us down.  
Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and  
sail'd,  
Full-blown, before us into rooms which  
gave  
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost  
In laurel. Her we ask'd of that and  
this,  
And who were tutors. 'Lady Blanche,'  
she said,  
'And Lady Psyche.' 'Which was  
prettiest, <sup>230</sup>  
Best natured ?' 'Lady Psyche.' 'Hers  
are we,'  
One voice, we cried ; and I sat down  
and wrote  
In such a hand as when a field of corn  
Bows all its ears before the roaring  
East :

'Three ladies of the Northern em-  
pire pray  
Your Highness would enroll them with  
your own,  
As Lady Psyche's pupils.'

This I seal'd ;  
The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,  
And raised the blinding bandage from  
his eyes. <sup>240</sup>  
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;  
And then to bed, where half in doze I  
seem'd  
To float about a glimmering night, and  
watch  
A full sea glazed with muffled moon-  
light swell  
On some dark shore just seen that it  
was rich.

As thro' the land at eve we went,  
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
We fell out, my wife and I,  
O, we fell out, I know not why,  
And kiss'd again with tears. <sup>250</sup>  
And blessings on the falling out  
That all the more endears,  
When we fall out with those we love  
And kiss again with tears !  
For when we came where lies the child  
We lost in other years,  
There above the little grave,  
O, there above the little grave,  
We kiss'd again with tears.

## II

At break of day the College Portress  
came ;  
She brought us academic silks, in hue  
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,  
And zoned with gold ; and now when  
these were on,  
And we as rich as moths from dusk  
cocoons,  
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us  
know  
The Princess Ida waited. Out we  
paced,  
I first, and following thro' the porch  
that sang  
All round with laurel, issued in a court  
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with  
lengths <sup>10</sup>  
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings  
gay  
Betwixt the pillars, and with great  
urns of flowers.  
The Muses and the Graces, group'd in  
threes,  
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the  
midst,  
And here and there on lattice edges  
lay  
Or book or lute ; but hastily we past.  
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper  
sat,  
With two tame leopards couch'd be-  
side her throne, <sup>19</sup>  
All beauty compass'd in a female form,  
The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant  
Of some clear planet close upon the  
sun,  
Than our man's earth ; such eyes were  
in her head,

And so much grace and power, breath-  
ing down  
From over her arch'd brows, with  
every turn  
Lived thro' her to the tips of her long  
hands,  
And to her feet. She rose her height,  
and said:

'We give you welcome; not with-  
out redound  
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
The first-fruits of the stranger; after-  
time, 30  
And that full voice which circles round  
the grave,  
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with  
me.  
What! are the ladies of your land so  
tall?'  
'We of the court,' said Cyril. 'From  
the court,'  
She answer'd, 'then ye know the  
Prince?' and he:  
'The climax of his age! as tho' there  
were  
One rose in all the world, your High-  
ness that,  
He worships your ideal.' She replied:  
'We scarcely thought in our own hall  
to hear  
This barren verbiage, current among  
men, 40  
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compli-  
ment.  
Your flight from out your bookless  
wilds would seem  
As arguing love of knowledge and of  
power;  
Your language proves you still the  
child. Indeed,  
We dream not of him; when we set  
our hand  
To this great work, we purposed with  
ourselves  
Never to wed. You likewise will do  
well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and  
fling  
The tricks which make us toys of  
men, that so  
Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
You may with those self-styled our  
lords ally 51  
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale  
with scale.'

At those high words, we, conscious  
of ourselves,  
Perused the matting; then an officer  
Rose up, and read the statutes, such  
as these:  
Not for three years to correspond with  
home;  
Not for three years to cross the liber-  
ties;  
Not for three years to speak with any  
men;  
And many more, which hastily sub-  
scribed,  
We enter'd on the boards. And 'Now,'  
she cried, 60  
'Ye are green wood, see ye warp not.  
Look, our hall!  
Our statutes!—not of those that men  
desire,  
Sleek Odaliskes, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East;  
but she  
That taught the Sabine how to rule,  
and she  
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
The Rhodope that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene  
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman  
brows 70  
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and  
lose  
Convention, since to look on noble  
forms  
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organ-  
ism  
That which is higher. O, lift your  
natures up;  
Embrace our aims; work out your  
freedom. Girls,  
Knowledge is now no more a fountain  
seal'd!  
Drink deep, until the habits of the  
slave,  
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite  
And slander, die. Better not be at all  
Than not be noble. Leave us; you  
may go. 80  
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue  
The fresh arrivals of the week before;  
For they press in from all the pro-  
vinces,  
And fill the hive.'  
She spoke, and bowing waved  
Dismissal; back again we crost the  
court

To Lady Psyche's. As we enter'd in,  
 There sat along the forms, like morn-  
 ing doves  
 That sun their milky bosoms on the  
 thatch,  
 A patient range of pupils; she herself  
 Erect behind a desk of satin-wood, 90  
 A quick brunette, well-moulded, fal-  
 con-eyed,  
 And on the hither side, or so she look'd,  
 Of twenty summers. At her left, a  
 child,  
 In shining drapcries, headed like a  
 star,  
 Her maiden babe, a double April old,  
 Aglafa slept. We sat; the lady  
 glanced;  
 Then Florian, but no livelier than the  
 dame  
 That whisper'd 'Asses' ears' among  
 the sedge,  
 'My sister,' 'Comely, too, by all  
 that's fair,'  
 Said Cyril. 'O hush, hush!' and she  
 began. 106

'This world was once a fluid haze  
 of light,  
 Till toward the centre set the starry  
 tides,  
 And eddied into suns, that wheeling  
 cast  
 The planets; then the monster, then  
 the man;  
 Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in  
 skins,  
 Raw from the prime, and crushing  
 down his mate,  
 As yet we find in barbarous isles, and  
 here  
 Among the lowest.'  
 Thereupon she took  
 A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious  
 past;  
 Glanced at the legendary Amazon 110  
 As emblematic of a nobler age;  
 Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke  
 of those  
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lu-  
 cumo;  
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman  
 lines  
 Of empire, and the woman's state in  
 each,  
 How far from just; till warming with  
 her theme

She fulmin'd out her scorn of laws  
 Salique  
 And little-footed China, touch'd on  
 Mahomet  
 With much contempt, and came to  
 chivalry,  
 When some respect, however slight,  
 was paid 120  
 To woman, superstition all awry.  
 However, then commenced the dawn:  
 a beam  
 Had slanted forward, falling in a  
 land  
 Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep,  
 indeed,  
 Their debt of thanks to her who first  
 had dared  
 To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
 Disyoke their necks from custom, and  
 assert  
 None lordlier than themselves but  
 that which made  
 Woman and man. She had founded;  
 they must build.  
 Here might they learn whatever men  
 were taught. 130  
 Let them not fear, some said their  
 heads were less;  
 Some men's were small, not they the  
 least of men;  
 For often fineness compensated size.  
 Besides the brain was like the hand,  
 and grew  
 With using; thence the man's, if more  
 was more.  
 He took advantage of his strength to  
 be  
 First in the field; some ages had been  
 lost;  
 But woman ripen'd earlier, and her  
 life  
 Was longer; and albeit their glorious  
 names  
 Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since  
 in truth 140  
 The highest is the measure of the man,  
 And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,  
 Nor those horn-handed breakers of  
 the glebe,  
 But Homer, Plato, Verulam, even so  
 With woman; and in arts of govern-  
 ment  
 Elizabeth and others, arts of war  
 The peasant Joan and others, arts of  
 grace  
 Sappho and others vied with any man;

And, last not least, she who had left  
her place,  
And bow'd her state to them, that  
they might grow <sup>150</sup>  
To use and power on this oasis, lapt  
In the arms of leisure, sacred from  
the blight  
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last  
She rose upon a wind of prophecy  
Dilating on the future: 'everywhere  
Two heads in council, two beside the  
hearth,  
Two in the tangled business of the  
world,  
Two in the liberal offices of life,  
Two plummetts dropt for one to sound  
the abyss  
Of science and the secrets of the mind;  
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic,  
more; <sup>161</sup>  
And everywhere the broad and boun-  
teous Earth  
Should bear a double growth of those  
rare souls,  
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood  
of the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us;  
the rest  
Parted; and, glowing full-faced wel-  
come, she  
Began to address us, and was moving  
on  
In gratulation, till as when a boat  
Tacks and the slacken'd sail flaps, all  
her voice  
Faltering and fluttering in her throat,  
she cried, <sup>170</sup>  
'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.'  
'O,' she said,  
'What do you here? and in this dress?  
and these?  
Why, who are these? a wolf within  
the fold!  
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gra-  
cious to me!  
A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!'  
'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd.  
'Wretched boy,  
How saw you not the inscription on  
the gate,  
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF  
DEATH?'  
'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who  
could think

The softer Adams of your Academe  
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were  
such <sup>181</sup>

As chanted on the blanching bones of  
men?

'But you will find it otherwise,' she  
said.

'You jest; ill jesting with edge-tools!  
my vow

Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,  
That axelike edge unturnable, our  
Head,

The Princess!' 'Well then, Psyche,  
take my life,

And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
For warning; bury me beside the gate,  
And cut this epitaph above my bones:  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain, 191.*  
*All for the common good of womankind.'*

'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having  
seen

And heard the Lady Psyche.'

I struck in.

'Albeit so mask'd, madam, I love the  
truth;

Receive it, and in me behold the Prince  
Your countryman, affianced years ago  
To the Lady Ida. Here, for here she  
was,

And thus—what other way was left?  
—I came.'

'O sir, O Prince, I have no country,  
none; <sup>200</sup>

If any, this; but none. Whate'er I  
was

Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.  
Affianced, sir? love-whispers may not  
breathe

Within this vestal limit, and how  
should I,

Who am not mine, say, live? The  
thunderbolt

Hangs silent; but prepare. I speak,  
it falls.'

'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that inscrip-  
tion there,

I think no more of deadly lurks  
therein,

Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
To scare the fowl from fruit; if more  
there be, <sup>210</sup>

If more and acted on, what follows?  
war;

Your own work marr'd; for this your  
Academe,

Whichever side be victor, in the hallos

Will topple to the trumpet down, and  
 pass  
 With all fair theories only made to  
 gild  
 A stormless summer.' 'Let the Prin-  
 cess judge  
 Of that,' she said: 'farewell, sir — and  
 to you.  
 I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I re-  
 join'd,  
 The fifth in line from that old Flo-  
 rian, <sup>220</sup>  
 Yet hangs his portrait in my father's  
 hall —  
 The gaunt old baron with his beetle  
 brow  
 Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty  
 fights —  
 As he bestrode my grandsire, when he  
 fell,  
 And all else fled? we point to it, and  
 we say,  
 The loyal warmth of Florian is not  
 cold,  
 But branches current yet in kindred  
 veins.'  
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added;  
 'she  
 With whom I sang about the morning  
 hills,  
 Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the  
 purple fly, <sup>230</sup>  
 And snared the squirrel of the glen?  
 are you  
 That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing  
 brow,  
 To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming  
 draught  
 Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and  
 read  
 My sickness down to happy dreams?  
 are you  
 That brother-sister Psyche, both in  
 one?  
 You were that Psyche, but what are  
 you now?'  
 'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for  
 whom  
 I would be that forever which I seem,  
 Woman, if I might sit beside your  
 feet, <sup>240</sup>  
 And glean your scatter'd sapience.'  
 Then once more,  
 'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I began,

'That on her bridal morn before she  
 past  
 From all her old companions, when  
 the king  
 Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that  
 ancient ties  
 Would still be dear beyond the south-  
 ern hills;  
 That were there any of our people  
 there  
 In want or peril, there was one to hear  
 And help them? look! for such are  
 these and I.'  
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd,  
 'to whom, <sup>250</sup>  
 In gentler days, your arrow-wounded  
 fawn  
 Came flying while you sat beside the  
 well?  
 The creature laid his muzzle on your  
 lap  
 And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it,  
 and the blood  
 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you  
 wept.  
 That was fawn's blood, not brother's,  
 yet you wept.  
 O, by the bright head of my little  
 niece,  
 You were that Psyche, and what are  
 you now?'  
 'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said  
 again, <sup>255</sup>  
 'The mother of the sweetest little maid  
 That ever crow'd for kisses.'  
 'Out upon it!'  
 She answer'd, 'peace! and why  
 should I not play  
 The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?  
 Him you call great; he for the common  
 weal,  
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,  
 As I might slay this child, if good nee-  
 were,  
 Slew both his sons; and I, shall I, on  
 whom  
 The secular emancipation turns  
 Of half this world, be swerved from  
 right to save <sup>270</sup>  
 A prince, a brother? a little will I  
 yield.  
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well for  
 you.  
 O, hard when love and duty clash! I  
 fear



My conscience will not count me fleck-  
less ; yet —

Hear my conditions : promise — other-  
wise

You perish — as you came, to slip away  
To-day, to-morrow, soon. It shall be  
said,

These women were too barbarous,  
would not learn ;

They fled, who might have shamed us.  
Promise, all.'

What could we else, we promised  
each ; and she, <sup>280</sup>  
Like some wild creature newly-caged,  
commenced

A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
By Florian ; holding out her lily arms  
Took both his hands, and smiling  
faintly said :

'I knew you at the first ; tho' you have  
grown

You scarce have alter'd. I am sad and  
glad

To see you, Florian. I give thee to  
death,

My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I.  
My needful seeming harshness, pardon  
it.

Our mother, is she well ?'

With that she kiss'd  
His forehead, then, a moment after,  
clung <sup>291</sup>

About him, and betwixt them blos-  
som'd up

From out a common vein of memory  
Sweet household talk, and phrases of  
the hearth,

And far allusion, till the gracious dews  
Began to glisten and to fall ; and while,  
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came  
a voice,

'I brought a message here from Lady  
Blanche.'

Back started she, and turning round  
we saw

The Lady Blanche's daughter where  
she stood, <sup>300</sup>

Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,  
That clad her like an April daffo-  
dilly —

Her mother's color — with her lips  
apart,

And all her thoughts as fair within  
her eyes,

As bottom agates seen to wave and  
float  
In crystal currents of clear morning  
seas.

So stood that same fair creature at  
the door.

Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah — Melissa —  
you !

You heard us ?' and Melissa, 'O, par-  
don me ! <sup>310</sup>

I heard, I could not help it, did not  
wish ;

But, dearest lady, pray you fear me not,  
Nor think I bear that heart within my  
breast,

To give three gallant gentlemen to  
death.'

'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we  
two

Were always friends, none closer, elm  
and vine ;

But yet your mother's jealous temper-  
ament —

Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse,  
or prove

The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear  
This whole foundation ruin, and I  
lose <sup>320</sup>

My honor, these their lives.' 'Ah,  
fear me not,'

Replied Melissa ; 'no — I would not  
tell,

No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
No, not to answer, madam, all those  
hard things

That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'  
'Be it so,' the other, 'that we still  
may lead

The new light up, and culminate in  
peace,

For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'  
Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest  
man

Feasted the woman wisest then, in  
halls <sup>330</sup>

Of Lebanonian cedar ; nor should  
you —

Tho', madam, *you* should answer, *we*  
would ask —

Less welcome find among us, if you  
came

Among us, debtors for our lives to  
you,

Myself for something more.' He said  
not what,

But 'Thanks,' she answer'd, 'go; we  
have been too long  
Together; keep your hoods about the  
face;  
They do so that affect abstraction  
here.

Push'd her flat hand against his face  
and laugh'd;  
And thus our conference closed.  
And then we strolled  
For half the day thro' stately thea-  
tres



'The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,  
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock'

Speak little; mix not with the rest;  
and hold  
Your promise. All, I trust, may yet  
be well. 340

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the  
child,  
And held her round the knees against  
his waist,  
And blew the swollen cheek of a  
trumpeter,  
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling,  
and the child

Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we  
sat, we heard  
The grave professor. On the lecture  
slate  
The circle rounded under female hands  
With flawless demonstration; follow'd  
then 351  
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
With scraps of thunderous epic lilted  
out  
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
And quoted odes, and jewels five  
words-long

That on the stretch'd forefinger of all  
 Time  
 Sparkle forever. Then we dipt in all  
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
 The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
 The morals, something of the frame,  
 the rock, <sup>360</sup>  
 The star, the bird, the fish, the shell,  
 the flower,  
 Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
 And whatsoever can be taught and  
 known;  
 Till like three horses that have broken  
 fence,  
 And glutted all night long breast-deep  
 in corn,  
 We issued gorged with knowledge,  
 and I spoke:  
 'Why, sirs, they do all this as well as  
 we.'  
 'They hunt old trails,' said Cyril,  
 'very well;  
 But when did woman ever yet invent?'  
 'Ungracious!' answer'd Florian;  
 'have you learnt <sup>370</sup>  
 No more from Psyche's lecture, you  
 that talk'd  
 The trash that made me sick, and  
 almost sad?'  
 'O, trash,' he said, 'but with a kernel  
 in it!  
 Should I not call her wise who made  
 me wise?  
 And learnt? I learnt more from her  
 in a flash  
 Than if my brainpan were an empty  
 hull,  
 And every Muse tumbled a science in.  
 A thousand hearts lie fallow in these  
 halls,  
 And round these halls a thousand  
 baby loves  
 Fly twanging headless arrows at the  
 hearts, <sup>380</sup>  
 Whence follows many a vacant pang;  
 but O,  
 With me, sir, enter'd in the bigger  
 boy,  
 The head of all the golden-shafted  
 firm,  
 The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche  
 too;  
 He cleft me thro' the stomacher. And  
 now  
 What think you of it, Florian? do I  
 chase

The substance or the shadow? will it  
 hold?  
 I have no sorcerer's malison on me,  
 No ghostly hauntings like his High-  
 ness. I  
 Flatter myself that always every-  
 where <sup>390</sup>  
 I know the substance when I see it.  
 Well,  
 Are castles shadows? Three of them?  
 Is she  
 The sweet proprietress a shadow? If  
 not,  
 Shall those three castles patch my  
 tatter'd coat?  
 For dear are those three castles to my  
 wants,  
 And dear is sister Psyche to my  
 heart,  
 And two dear things are one of double  
 worth;  
 And much I might have said, but that  
 my zone  
 Unmann'd me. Then the Doctors! O,  
 to hear  
 The Doctors! O, to watch the thirsty  
 plants <sup>400</sup>  
 Imbibing! once or twice I thought to  
 roar,  
 To break my chain, to shake my  
 mane; but thou,  
 Modulate me, soul of mincing mim-  
 icry!  
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my  
 throat;  
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to  
 meet  
 Star-sisters answering under crescent  
 brows;  
 Abate the stride which speaks of man,  
 and loose  
 A flying charm of blushes o'er this  
 cheek,  
 Where they like swallows coming out  
 of time  
 Will wonder why they came. But  
 hark the bell <sup>410</sup>  
 For dinner, let us go!  
 And in we stream'd  
 Among the columns, pacing staid and  
 still  
 By twos and threes, till all from end  
 to end  
 With beauties every shade of brown  
 and fair  
 In colors gayer than the morning mist,

The long hall glitter'd like a bed of  
 flowers.  
 How might a man not wander from  
 his wits  
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I  
 kept mine own  
 Intent on her, who rapt in glorious  
 dreams,  
 The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
 Sat compass'd with professors; they,  
 the while, <sup>421</sup>  
 Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and  
 fro.  
 A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost  
 terms  
 Of art and science; Lady Blanche  
 alone  
 Of faded form and haughtiest linea-  
 ments,  
 With all her autumn tresses falsely  
 brown,  
 Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-  
 cat  
 In act to spring.  
                                 At last a solemn grace  
 Concluded, and we sought the gar-  
 dens. There  
 One walk'd reciting by herself, and  
 one <sup>430</sup>  
 In this hand held a volume as to read,  
 And smoothed a petted peacock down  
 with that.  
 Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by  
 Or under arches of the marble bridge  
 Hung, shadow'd from the heat; some  
 hid and sought  
 In the orange thickets; others tost a  
 ball  
 Above the fountain-jets, and back  
 again  
 With laughter; others lay about the  
 lawns,  
 Of the older sort, and murmur'd that  
 their May  
 Was passing — what was learning unto  
 them? <sup>440</sup>  
 They wish'd to marry; they could  
 rule a house;  
 Men hated learned women. But we  
 three  
 Sat muffled like the Fates; and often  
 came  
 Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
 Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
 That harm'd not. Then day droopt;  
 the chapel bells

Call'd us; we left the walks; we  
 mixt with those  
 Six hundred maidens clad in purest  
 white,  
 Before two streams of light from wall  
 to wall,  
 While the great organ almost burst  
 his pipes, <sup>450</sup>  
 Groaning for power, and rolling thro'  
 the court  
 A long melodious thunder to the sound  
 Of solemn psalms and silver litanies,  
 The work of Ida, to call down from  
 heaven  
 A blessing on her labors for the world.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
     Wind of the western sea,  
 Low, low, breathe and blow,  
     Wind of the western sea!  
 Over the rolling waters go, <sup>460</sup>  
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
     Blow him again to me;  
 While my little one, while my pretty one  
     sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
     Father will come to thee soon;  
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
     Father will come to thee soon;  
 Father will come to his babe in the  
     nest,  
 Silver sails all out of the west  
     Under the silver moon; <sup>470</sup>  
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,  
     sleep.

## III

Morn in the white wake of the morn-  
 ing star  
 Came furrowing all the orient into  
 gold.  
 We rose, and each by other drest with  
 care  
 Descended to the court that lay three  
 parts  
 In shadow, but the Muses' heads were  
 touch'd  
 Above the darkness from their native  
 East.

There while we stood beside the  
 fount, and watch'd  
 Or seem'd to watch the dancing bub-  
 ble, approach'd  
 Melissa, tinged with wan from lack  
 of sleep,

Or grief, and glowing round her dewy  
 eyes<sup>10</sup>  
 The circled Iris of a night of tears;  
 And 'Fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while  
 yet you may!  
 My mother knows.' And when I  
 ask'd her 'how,'  
 'My fault,' she wept, 'my fault! and  
 yet not mine;  
 Yet mine in part. O, hear me, pardon  
 me!  
 My mother, 'tis her wont from night  
 to night  
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.  
 She says the Princess should have  
 been the Head,  
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two  
 arms;  
 And so it was agreed when first they  
 came;<sup>20</sup>  
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand  
 now,  
 And she the left, or not or seldom used;  
 Hers more than half the students, all  
 the love.  
 And so last night she fell to canvass  
 • you,  
*Her* countrywomen! she did not envy  
 her.  
 "Who ever saw such wild barbarians?  
 Girls?—more like men!" and at these  
 words the snake,  
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my  
 breast;  
 And O, sirs, could I help it, but my  
 cheek  
 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx  
 eye<sup>30</sup>  
 To fix and make me hotter, till she  
 laugh'd:  
 "O marvellously modest maiden, you!  
 Men! girls, like men! why, if they  
 had been men  
 You need not set your thoughts in  
 rubric thus  
 For wholesale comment." Pardon, I  
 am shamed  
 That I must needs repeat for my excuse  
 What looks so little graceful: "men"  
 —for still  
 My mother went revolving on the  
 word—  
 "And so they are,—very like men  
 indeed—  
 And with that woman closeted for  
 hours!"<sup>40</sup>

Then came these dreadful words out  
 one by one,  
 "Why—these—*are*—men;" I shud-  
 der'd; "and you know it."  
 "O, ask me nothing," I said. "And  
 she knows too,  
 And she conceals it." So my mother  
 clutch'd  
 The truth at once, but with no word  
 from me;  
 And now thus early risen she goes to  
 inform  
 The Princess. Lady Psyche will be  
 crush'd;  
 But you may yet be saved, and there-  
 fore fly;  
 But heal me with your pardon ere  
 you go.'

'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a  
 blush?'<sup>50</sup>  
 Said Cyril: 'Pale one, blush again;  
 than wear  
 Those lilies, better blush our lives  
 away.  
 Yet let us breathe for one hour more  
 in heaven,'  
 He added, 'lest some classic angel  
 speak  
 In scorn of us, "They mounted, Gany-  
 medes,  
 To tumble, Vulcans, on the second  
 morn."  
 But I will melt this marble into  
 wax  
 To yield us farther furlough;' and he  
 went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls,  
 and thought  
 He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,'  
 Florian ask'd,<sup>60</sup>  
 'How grew this feud betwixt the right  
 and left.'  
 'O, long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these  
 two  
 Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my  
 mother,  
 Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
 Pent in a crevice: much I bear with  
 her.  
 I never knew my father, but she says—  
 God help her!—she was wedded to a  
 fool;  
 And still she rail'd against the state  
 of things.

She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
 And from the Queen's decease she  
     brought her up. <sup>70</sup>  
 But when your sister came she won  
     the heart  
 Of Ida; they were still together,  
     grew —  
 For so they said themselves — inoscu-  
     lated;  
 Consonant chords that shiver to one  
     note;  
 One mind in all things. Yet my mo-  
     ther still  
 Affirms your Psyche thieved her  
     theories,  
 And angled with them for her pupil's  
     love;  
 She calls her plagiarist, I know not  
     what.  
 But I must go; I dare not tarry,' and  
     light,  
 As flies the shadow of a bird, she  
     fled. <sup>80</sup>

Then murmur'd Florian, gazing  
     after her:  
 'An open-hearted maiden, true and  
     pure.  
 If I could love, why this were she.  
     How pretty  
 Her blushing was, and how she blush'd  
     again,  
 As if to close with Cyril's random  
     wish!  
 Not like your Princess cramn'd with  
     erring pride,  
 Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags  
     in tow.'

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter  
     of the crane,  
 The dove may murmur of the dove,  
     but I  
 An eagle clung an eagle to the  
     sphere. <sup>90</sup>  
 My princess, O my princess! true she  
     errs,



'Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought  
 He scarce would prosper'

But in her own grand way ; being  
 herself  
 Three times more noble than three  
 score of men,  
 She sees herself in every woman else,  
 And so she wears her error like a  
 crown  
 To blind the truth and me. For her,  
 and her,  
 Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix  
 The nectar ; but — ah, she — whene'er  
 she moves  
 The Samian Herè rises, and she speaks  
 A Memnon smitten with the morning  
 sun.' 100

So saying from the court we paced,  
 and gain'd  
 The terrace ranged along the northern  
 front,  
 And leaning there on those balusters,  
 high  
 Above the empurpled champaign,  
 drank the gale  
 That blown about the foliage under-  
 neath,  
 And sated with the innumerable rose,  
 Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither  
 came  
 Cyril, and yawning, 'O hard task,'  
 he cried :  
 'No fighting shadows here. I forced  
 a way  
 Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and  
 gnarl'd.' 110  
 Better to clear prime forests, heave  
 and thump  
 A league of street in summer solstice  
 down,  
 Than hammer at this reverend gentle-  
 woman.  
 I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd ; found  
 her there  
 At point to move, and settled in her  
 eyes  
 The green malignant light of coming  
 storm.  
 Sir, I was courteous, every phrase  
 well-oil'd,  
 As man's could be ; yet maiden-meek  
 I pray'd  
 Concealment. She demanded who  
 we were,  
 And why we came ? I fabled nothing  
 fair, 120  
 But, your example pilot, told her all.

Up went the hush'd amaze of hand  
 and eye.  
 But when I dwelt upon your old affi-  
 ance,  
 She answer'd sharply that I talk'd  
 astray.  
 I urged the fierce inscription on the  
 gate,  
 And our three lives. True — we had  
 limed ourselves  
 With open eyes, and we must take  
 the chance.  
 But such extremes, I told her, well  
 might harm  
 The woman's cause. "Not more than  
 now," she said,  
 "So puddled as it is with favoritism."  
 I tried the mother's heart. Shame  
 might befall 131  
 Melissa, knowing, saying not she  
 knew ;  
 Her answer was, "Leave me to deal  
 with that."  
 I spoke of war to come and many  
 deaths,  
 And she replied, her duty was to  
 speak,  
 And duty duty, clear of consequences.  
 I grew discouraged, sir ; but since I  
 knew  
 No rock so hard but that a little wave  
 May beat admission in a thousand  
 years,  
 I recommenced : "Decide not ere you  
 pause." 140  
 I find you here but in the second place,  
 Some say the third — the authentic  
 foundress you.  
 I offer boldly ; we will seat you high-  
 est.  
 Wink at our advent ; help my prince  
 to gain  
 His rightful bride, and here I promise  
 you  
 Some palace in our land, where you  
 shall reign  
 The head and heart of all our fair she-  
 world,  
 And your great name flow on with  
 broadening time  
 For ever." Well, she balanced this a  
 little,  
 And told me she would answer us to-  
 day, 150  
 Meantime be mute ; thus much, nor  
 more I gain'd.'

He ceasing, came a message from  
the Head.  
'That afternoon the Princess rode to  
take  
The dip of certain strata to the north.  
Would we go with her? we should find  
the land  
Worth seeing, and the river made a  
fall  
Out yonder;' then she pointed on to  
where  
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks  
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of  
the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro'  
all 160  
Its range of duties to the appointed  
hour.  
Then summon'd to the porch we went.  
She stood  
Among her maidens, higher by the  
head,  
Her back against a pillar, her foot on  
one  
Of those tame leopards. Kitten-like he  
roll'd  
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew  
near;  
I gazed. On a sudden my strange  
seizure came  
Upon me, the weird vision of our house.  
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,  
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,  
Her college and her maidens empty  
masks, 171  
And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
For all things were and were not. Yet  
I felt  
My heart beat thick with passion and  
with awe;  
Then from my breast the involuntary  
sigh  
Brake, as she smote me with the light  
of eyes  
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and  
shook  
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
Went forth in long retinue following  
up  
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she  
said: 181  
O friend, we trust that you esteem'd  
us not

Too harsh to your companion yester  
morn;  
Unwillingly we spake.' 'No— not to  
her,'  
I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we  
spake  
Your Highness might have seem'd the  
thing you say.'  
'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassa-  
dresses  
From him to me? we give you, being  
strange,  
A license; speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him— could  
have wish'd — 190  
'Our king expects— was there no pre-  
contract?  
There is no truer-hearted— ah, you  
seem  
All he prefigured, and he could not see  
The bird of passage flying south but  
long'd  
To follow. Surely, if your Highness  
keep  
Your purport, you will shock him even  
to death,  
Or baser courses, children of despair.'

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not  
read— no books?  
Quoit, tennis, ball— no games? nor  
deals in that  
Which men delight in, martial exer-  
cise? 200  
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
Methinks he seems no better than a  
girl;  
As girls were once, as we ourself have  
been.  
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt  
with them.  
We touch on our dead self, nor shun  
to do it,  
Being other— since we learnt our  
meaning here,  
To lift the woman's fallen divinity  
Upon an even pedestal with man.'

She paused, and added with a haugh-  
tier smile,  
'And as to precontracts, we move, my  
friend, 210  
At no man's beck, but know ourself  
and thee,  
O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out



She kept her state, and left the drunk-  
en king  
To brawl at Shushan underneath the  
palms.'

'Alas, your Highness breathes full  
East,' I said,  
'On that which leans to you! I know  
the Prince,  
I prize his truth. And then how vast  
a work

To assail this gray preëminence of man!  
You grant me license; might I use it?  
think;

Ere half be done perchance your life  
may fail; 220

Then comes the feebler heiress of your  
plan,

And takes and ruins all; and thus  
your pains

May only make that footprint upon  
sand

Which old-recurring waves of preju-  
dice

Resmooth to nothing. Might I dread  
that you,

With only Fame for spouse and your  
great deeds

For issue, yet may live in vain, and  
miss

Meanwhile what every woman counts  
her due,

Love, children, happiness?'

And she exclaim'd,  
'Peace, you young savage of the  
Northern wild! 230

What! tho' your Prince's love were  
like a god's,

Have we not made ourself the sacri-  
fice?

You are bold indeed; we are not talk'd  
to thus.

Yet will we say for children, would  
they grew

Like field-flowers everywhere! we like  
them well:

But children die; and let me tell you,  
girl,

Howe'er you babble, great deeds can-  
not die;

They with the sun and moon renew  
their light

For ever, blessing those that look on  
them.

Children — that men may pluck them  
from our hearts, 240

Kill us with pity, break us with our-  
selves —

O — children — there is nothing upon  
earth

More miserable than she that has a son  
And sees him err. Nor would we work  
for fame;

Tho' she perhaps might reap the ap-  
plause of Great,

Who learns the one *POU STO* whence  
after-hands

May move the world, tho' she herself  
effect

But little; wherefore up and act, nor  
shrink

For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
By frail successors. Would, indeed,

we had been, 250

In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
Of giants living each a thousand years,

That we might see our own work out,  
and watch

'The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in my-  
self

If that strange poet-princess with her  
grand

Imaginations might at all be won.

And she broke out interpreting my  
thoughts:

'No doubt we seem a kind of mon-  
ster to you;

We are used to that; for women, up  
till this 260

Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-  
isle taboo,

Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far  
In high desire, they know not, cannot

guess

How much their welfare is a passion  
to us.

If we could give them surer, quicker  
proof —

O, if our end were less achievable  
By slow approaches than by single act

Of immolation, any phase of death,  
We were as prompt to spring against  
the pikes,

Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it, 270

'To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;  
And up we came to where the river  
sloped



'The splendor falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story'

To plunge in cataract, shattering on  
black blocks  
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook  
the woods,  
And danced the color, and, below,  
stuck out  
The bones of some vast bulk that lived  
and roar'd  
Before man was. She gazed awhile  
and said,  
'As these rude bones to us, are we to  
her  
That will be.' 'Dare we dream of  
that,' I ask'd,  
'Which wrought us, as the workman  
and his work,

That practice betters?' 'How,' she  
cried, 'you love  
The metaphysics! read and earn our  
prize,  
A golden brooch. Beneath an emer-  
ald plane  
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
Of hemlock—our device, wrought to  
the life—  
She rapt upon her subject, he on her;  
For there are schools for all.' 'And  
yet,' I said,  
'Methinks I have not found among  
them all  
One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of  
that,'

She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not;  
     in truth  
 We shudder but to dream our maids  
     should ape  
 Those monstrous males that carve the  
     living hound,  
 And cram him with the fragments of  
     the grave,  
 Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,  
 Dabbling a shameless hand with shame-  
     ful jest,  
 Encarnalize their spirits. Yet we  
     know  
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this  
     matter hangs.  
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
 Nor willing men should come among  
     us, learnt,  
 For many weary moons before we  
     came,  
 This craft of healing. Were you sick,  
     ourself  
 Would tend upon you. To your ques-  
     tion now,  
 Which touches on the workman and  
     his work.  
 Let there be light and there was light;  
     't is so,  
 For was, and is, and will be, are but  
     is,  
 And all creation is one act at once,  
 The birth of light; but we that are  
     not all,  
 As parts, can see but parts, now this,  
     now that,  
 And live, perforce, from thought to  
     thought, and make  
 One act a phantom of succession.  
     Thus  
 Our weakness somehow shapes the  
     shadow, Time;  
 But in the shadow will we work, and  
     mould  
 The woman to the fuller day.'  
                                     She spake  
 With kindled eyes: we rode a league  
     beyond,  
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood cross-  
     ing, came  
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
 Full of all beauty. 'O, how sweet,'  
     I said, —  
 For I was half-oblivious of my mask, —  
 'To linger here with one that loved  
     us!' 'Yea,'

321

She answer'd, 'or with fair philoso-  
     phies  
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these  
     fields  
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian  
     lawns,  
 Where paced the demigods of old, and  
     saw  
 The soft white vapor streak the  
     crowned towers  
 Built to the Sun.' Then, turning to  
 her maids,  
 'Pitch our pavilion here upon the  
     sward;  
 Lay out the viands.' At the word,  
     they raised  
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
 With fair Corinna's triumph; here she  
     stood,  
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-  
     check,  
 The woman-conqueror; woman-con-  
     quer'd there  
 The bearded Victor of ten-thousand  
     hymns,  
 And all the men mourn'd at his side  
     But we  
 Set forth to climb; then, climbing  
     Cyril kept  
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
 With mine affianced. Many a little  
     hand  
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on  
     the rocks,  
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel  
     set  
 In the dark crag. And then we turn'd,  
     we wound  
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
 Hammering and clinking, chattering  
     stony names  
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap  
     and tuff,  
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the sun  
 Grew broader toward his death and  
     fell, and all  
 The rosy heights came out above the  
     lawns.

The splendor falls on castle walls  
 And snowy summits old in story; 344  
 The long light shakes across the lakes,  
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes fly-  
     ing,  
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,  
     dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, farther going!  
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,  
dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky, <sup>360</sup>  
They faint on hill or field or river;  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow for ever and for ever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes fly-  
ing,  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,  
dying.

## IV

'There sinks the nebulous star we call  
the sun,  
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,'  
Said Ida; 'let us down and rest;' and  
we  
Down from the lean and wrinkled pre-  
cipices,  
By every coppice-feather'd chasm and  
cleft,  
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to  
where below  
No bigger than a glowworm shone the  
tent  
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she  
lean'd on me,  
Descending; once or twice she lent her  
hand,  
And blissful palpitations in the blood  
Stirring a sudden transport rose and  
fell. <sup>11</sup>

But when we planted level feet, and  
dipt  
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,  
There leaning deep in broider'd down  
we sank  
Our elbows; on a tripod in the midst  
A fragrant flame rose, and before us  
glow'd  
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and  
gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us;  
lightlier move  
The minutes fledged with music;' and  
a maid,  
Of those beside her, smote her harp  
and sang. <sup>20</sup>

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they  
mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a  
sail,  
That brings our friends up from the under-  
world,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer  
dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds <sup>31</sup>  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering  
square;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no  
more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy  
feign'd  
On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!'

She ended with such passion that  
the tear <sup>41</sup>  
She sang of shook and fell, an erring  
pearl  
Lost in her bosom; but with some dis-  
dain  
Answer'd the Princess: 'If indeed  
there haunt  
About the moulder'd lodges of the past  
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to  
men,  
Well needs it we should cram our ears  
with wool  
And so pace by. But thine are fancies  
hatch'd  
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it  
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost, <sup>50</sup>  
But trim our sails, and let old bygones  
be,  
While down the streams that float us  
each and all  
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs  
of ice,  
Throne after throne, and molten on the  
waste  
Becomes a cloud; for all things serve  
their time  
Toward that great year of equal might  
and rights.

Nor would I fight with iron laws, in  
 the end  
 Found golden. Let the past be past,  
 let be  
 Their cancell'd Babels ; tho' the rough  
 kex break  
 The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-  
 blown goat 60  
 Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-  
 tree split  
 Their monstrous idols, care not while  
 we hear  
 A trumpet in the distance pealing  
 news  
 Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle,  
 burns  
 Above the unrisen morrow.' Then to  
 me,  
 'Know you no song of your own  
 'land,' she said,  
 'Not such as moans about the retro-  
 spect,  
 But deals with the other distance and  
 the hues  
 Of promise ; not a death's-head at the  
 wine ?'

Then I remember'd one myself had  
 made, 70  
 What time I watch'd the swallow  
 winging south  
 From mine own land, part made long  
 since, and part  
 Now while I sang, and maiden-like as  
 far  
 As I could ape their treble did I  
 sing.

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying  
 south,  
 Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
 And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

'O, tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest  
 each,  
 That bright and fierce and fickle is the  
 South,  
 And dark and true and tender is the  
 North. 80

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow,  
 and light  
 Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
 And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O, were I thou that she might take me in,  
 And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
 Would rock the snowy cradle till I died!

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart  
 with love,  
 Delaying as the tender ash delays  
 To clothe herself, when all the woods are  
 green ?

'O, tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is  
 flown ; 90  
 Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
 But in the North long since my nest is  
 made.

'O, tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
 And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
 And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden  
 woods,  
 Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and  
 make her mine,  
 And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at  
 each,  
 Like the Ithacensian suitors in old  
 time, 100  
 Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd  
 with alien lips,  
 And knew not what they meant ; for  
 still my voice  
 Rang false. But smiling, 'Not for  
 thee,' she said,  
 'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
 Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers,  
 rather, maid,  
 Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-  
 crake  
 Grate her harsh kindred in the grass  
 — and this  
 A mere love-poem ! O, for such, my  
 friend,  
 We hold them slight ; they mind us  
 of the time  
 When we made bricks in Egypt.  
 Knaves are men, 110  
 That lute and flute fantastic tender-  
 ness,  
 And dress the victim to the offering up,  
 And paint the gates of Hell with Para-  
 dise,  
 And play the slave to gain the tyranny.  
 Poor soul ! I had a maid of honor  
 once ;  
 She wept her true eyes blind for such  
 a one,  
 A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
 I loved her. Peace be with her. She  
 is dead.

So they blaspheme the muse ! But  
 great is song  
 Used to great ends ; ourself have often  
 tried <sup>120</sup>  
 Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm  
 have dash'd  
 The passion of the prophetess ; for  
 song  
 Is duer unto freedom, force and growth  
 Of spirit, than to junketing and  
 love.  
 Love is it ? Would this same mock-  
 love, and this  
 Mock-Hymen were laid up like win-  
 ter bats,  
 Till all men grew to rate us at our  
 worth,  
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty  
 babes  
 To be dandled, no, but living wills,  
 and sphered  
 Whole in ourselves and owed to none.  
 Enough ! <sup>130</sup>  
 But now to leaven play with profit,  
 you,  
 Know you no song, the true growth  
 of your soil,  
 That gives the manners of your coun-  
 trywomen ?

She spoke and turn'd her sumptu-  
 ous head with eyes  
 Of shining expectation fixt on mine.  
 Then while I dragg'd my brains for  
 such a song,  
 Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd  
 glass had wrought,  
 Or master'd by the sense of sport,  
 began  
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-  
 catch  
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experi-  
 ences <sup>140</sup>  
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded  
 at him,  
 I frowning ; Psyche flush'd and wann'd  
 and shook ;  
 The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows.  
 'Forbear,' the Princess cried ; 'For-  
 bear, sir,' I ;  
 And heated thro' and thro' with wrath  
 and love,  
 I smote him on the breast. He started  
 up ;  
 There rose a shriek as of a city  
 sack'd ;

Melissa clamor'd, 'Flee the death ;'  
 'To horse !'  
 Said Ida, 'home ! to horse !' and fled,  
 as flies  
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the  
 dusk <sup>150</sup>  
 When some one batters at the dove-  
 cote doors,  
 Disorderly the women. Alone I stood  
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at  
 heart  
 In the pavilion. There like parting  
 hopes  
 I heard them passing from me ; hoof  
 by hoof,  
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
 Clang'd on the bridge ; and then an-  
 other shriek,  
 'The Head, the Head, the Princess,  
 O the Head !'  
 For blind with rage she miss'd the  
 plank, and roll'd  
 In the river. Out I sprang from glow  
 to gloom ; <sup>160</sup>  
 There whirl'd her white robe like a  
 blossom'd branch  
 Rapt to the horrible fall. A glance I  
 gave,  
 No more, but woman-vested as I was  
 Plunged, and the flood drew ; yet I  
 caught her ; then  
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my  
 left  
 The weight of all the hopes of half  
 the world,  
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A  
 tree  
 Was half-disrooted from his place and  
 stoop'd  
 To drench his dark locks in the gur-  
 gling wave  
 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove  
 and caught, <sup>170</sup>  
 And grasping down the boughs I  
 gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmer-  
 ingly group'd  
 In the hollow bank. One reaching  
 forward drew  
 My burthen from mine arms ; they  
 cried, 'She lives.'  
 They bore her back into the tent :  
 but I,  
 So much a kind of shame within me  
 wrought,

Not yet endured to meet her opening  
 eyes,  
 Nor found my friends; but push'd  
 alone on foot —  
 For since her horse was lost I left her  
 mine —  
 Across the woods, and less from In-  
 dian craft <sup>180</sup>  
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found  
 at length  
 The garden portals. Two great stat-  
 ues, Art  
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt  
 were valves  
 Of open-work in which the hunter  
 rued  
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his  
 brows  
 Had sprouted, and the branches there-  
 upon  
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked  
 the gates.

A little space was left between the  
 horns,  
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top  
 with pain, <sup>190</sup>  
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden  
 walks,  
 And, tost on thoughts that changed  
 from hue to hue,  
 Now poring on the glowworm, now  
 the star,  
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had  
 wheel'd  
 Thro' a great arc his seven slow  
 suns.

A step  
 Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
 Than female, moving thro' the uncer-  
 tain gloom,  
 Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this  
 were she,'  
 But it was Florian. 'Hist, O, hist!'  
 he said,  
 'They seek us; out so late is out of  
 rules. <sup>200</sup>  
 Moreover, "Seize the strangers" is  
 the cry.  
 How came you here?' I told him.  
 'I,' said he,  
 'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
 To whom none spare, half-sick at  
 heart, return'd.  
 Arriving all confused among the rest

With hooded brows I crept into the  
 hall,  
 And, couch'd behind a Judith, under-  
 neath  
 The head of Holofernes peep'd and  
 saw.  
 Girl after girl was call'd to trial; each  
 Disclaim'd all knowledge of us; last  
 of all, <sup>210</sup>  
 Melissa; trust me, sir, I pitied her.  
 She, question'd if she knew us men,  
 at first  
 Was silent; closer prest, denied it not,  
 And then, demanded if her mother  
 knew,  
 Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied;  
 From whence the Royal mind, familiar  
 with her,  
 Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent  
 For Psyche, but she was not there;  
 she call'd  
 For Psyche's child to cast it from the  
 doors;  
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her  
 face to face; <sup>220</sup>  
 And I slipt out. But whither will  
 you now?  
 And where are Psyche, Cyril? both  
 are fled;  
 What, if together? that were not so  
 well.  
 Would rather we had never come! I  
 dread  
 His wildness, and the chances of the  
 dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him  
 more than I  
 That struck him; this is proper to the  
 clown,  
 Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled,  
 still the clown,  
 To harm the thing that trusts him,  
 and to shame  
 That which he says he loves. For  
 Cyril, howe'er <sup>230</sup>  
 He deal in frolic, as to-night — the song  
 Might have been worse and sinn'd in  
 grosser lips  
 Beyond all pardon — as it is, I hold  
 These flashes on the surface are not he.  
 He has a solid base of temperament;  
 But as the water-lily starts and slides  
 Upon the level in little puffs of wind,  
 Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is  
 he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a  
 tamarisk near  
 Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,  
 'Names!' <sup>240</sup>  
 He, standing still, was clutch'd; but  
 I began  
 To thrid the musky-circled mazes,  
 wind  
 And double in and out the boles, and  
 race  
 By all the fountains. Fleet I was of  
 foot;  
 Before me shower'd the rose in flakes;  
 behind  
 I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine  
 ear  
 Bubbled the nightingale and heeded  
 not,  
 And secret laughter tickled all my  
 soul.  
 At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine  
 That clapt the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
 And falling on my face was caught  
 and known. <sup>251</sup>

They haled us to the Princess where  
 she sat  
 High in the hall; above her droop'd a  
 lamp,  
 And made the single jewel on her  
 brow  
 Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-  
 head,  
 Prophet of storm; a handmaid on  
 each side  
 Bow'd toward her, combing out her  
 long black hair  
 Damp from the river; and close be-  
 hind her stood  
 Eight daughters of the plough,  
 stronger than men,  
 Huge women blowzed with health,  
 and wind, and rain, <sup>260</sup>  
 And labor. Each was like a Druid  
 rock;  
 Or like a spire of land that stands  
 apart  
 Cleft from the main, and wail'd about  
 with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd divid-  
 ing clove  
 An advent to the throne; and there  
 beside,  
 Half-naked as if caught at once from  
 bed

And tumbled on the purple footcloth,  
 lay  
 The lily-shining child; and on the left,  
 Bow'd on her palms and folded up  
 from wrong,  
 Her round white shoulder shaken with  
 her sobs, <sup>270</sup>  
 Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect  
 Stood up and spake, an affluent orator:

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old  
 days;  
 You prized my counsel, lived upon  
 my lips.  
 I led you then to all the Castalies;  
 I fed you with the milk of every Muse;  
 I loved you like this kneeler, and you  
 me  
 Your second mother: those were gra-  
 cious times.  
 Then came your new friend; you  
 began to change —  
 I saw it and grieved — to slacken and  
 to cool; <sup>280</sup>  
 Till taken with her seeming openness  
 You turn'd your warmer currents all  
 to her,  
 To me you froze; this was my need  
 for all.  
 Yet I bore up in part from ancient  
 love,  
 And partly that I hoped to win you  
 back,  
 And partly conscious of my own  
 deserts,  
 And partly that you were my civil  
 head,  
 And chiefly you were born for some-  
 thing great,  
 In which I might your fellow-worker  
 be,  
 When time should serve; and thus a  
 noble scheme <sup>290</sup>  
 Grew up from seed we two long since  
 had sown;  
 In us true growth, in her a Jonah's  
 gourd,  
 Up in one night and due to sudden  
 sun.  
 We took this palace; but even from  
 the first  
 You stood in your own light and  
 darken'd mine.  
 What student came but that you  
 planed her path  
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,



A foreigner, and I your country-  
     woman,  
 I your old friend and tried, she new  
     in all?  
 But still her lists were swell'd and  
     mine were lean;  
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be  
     known.  
 Then came these wolves; *they* knew  
     her; *they* endured,  
 Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,  
 To tell her what they were, and she  
     to hear.  
 And me none told. Not less to an eye  
     like mine,  
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
 Last night, their mask was patent,  
     and my foot  
 Was to you. But I thought again; I  
     fear'd  
 To meet a cold "We thank you, we  
     shall hear of it  
 From Lady Psyche;" you had gone  
     to her,  
 She told, perforce, and winning easy  
     grace,  
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd  
     among us  
 In our young nursery still unknown,  
     the stem  
 Less grain than touchwood, while my  
     honest heat  
 Were all miscounted as malignant  
     haste  
 To push my rival out of place and  
     power.  
 But public use required she should be  
     known;  
 And since my oath was ta'en for pub-  
     lic use,  
 I broke the letter of it to keep the  
     sense.  
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd  
     them well,  
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief  
     done;  
 And yet this day—tho' you should  
     hate me for it—  
 I came to tell you; found that you  
     had gone,  
 Ridden to the hills, she likewise.  
     Now, I thought,  
 That surely she will speak; if not,  
     then I.  
 Did she? These monsters blazon'd  
     what they were,

According to the coarseness of their  
     kind,  
 For thus I hear; and known at last—  
     my work—  
 And full of cowardice and guilty  
     shame—  
 I grant in her some sense of shame—  
     she flies;  
 And I remain on whom to wreak your  
     rage,  
 I, that have lent my life to build up  
     yours,  
 I, that have wasted here health,  
     wealth, and time,  
 And talent, I—you know it—I will  
     not boast;  
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your  
     plan,  
 Divorced from my experience, will be  
     chaff  
 For every gust of chance, and men  
     will say  
 We did not know the real light, but  
     chased  
 The wisp that flickers where no foot  
     can tread.  
     She ceased; the Princess answer'd  
     coldly, 'Good;  
 Your oath is broken; we dismiss you,  
     go.  
 For this lost lamb'—she pointed to  
     the child—  
 'Our mind is changed; we take it to  
     ourselves.'

Thereat the lady stretch'd a vulture  
     throat,  
 And shot from crooked lips a haggard  
     smile.  
 'The plan was mine. I built the nest,'  
     she said,  
 'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and  
     stoop'd to updrag  
 Melissa. She, half on her mother propt,  
 Half-drooping from her, turn'd her  
     face, and cast  
 A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
 Which melted Florian's fancy as she  
     hung,  
 A Niobeān daughter, one arm out,  
 Appealing to the bolts of heaven; and  
     while  
 We gazed upon her came a little stir  
 About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd  
 Among us, out of breath, as one pur-  
     sued,

A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear  
 Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her  
 face, and wing'd  
 Her transit to the throne, whereby she  
 fell  
 Delivering seal'd dispatches which the  
 Head <sup>360</sup>  
 Took half-amazed, and in her lion's  
 mood  
 Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
 Regarding, while she read, till over  
 brow  
 And cheek and bosom brake the wrath-  
 ful bloom  
 As of some fire against a stormy cloud,  
 When the wild peasant rights himself,  
 the rick  
 Flames, and his anger reddens in the  
 heavens;  
 For anger most it seem'd, while now  
 her breast,  
 Beaten with some great passion at her  
 heart,  
 Palpitated, her hand shook, and we  
 heard <sup>370</sup>  
 In the dead hush the papers that she  
 held  
 Rustle. At once the lost lamb at her  
 feet  
 Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam.  
 The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she  
 crush'd  
 The scrolls together, made a sudden  
 turn  
 As if to speak, but, utterance failing  
 her,  
 She whirl'd them on to me, as who  
 should say  
 'Read,' and I read — two letters — one  
 her sire's :

'Fair daughter, when we sent the  
 Prince your way  
 We knew not your ungracious laws,  
 which learnt, <sup>380</sup>  
 We, conscious of what temper you are  
 built,  
 Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but  
 fell  
 Into his father's hand, who has this  
 night,  
 You lying close upon this territory,  
 Slipt round and in the dark invested  
 you,  
 And here he keeps me hostage for his  
 son.'

The second was my father's, running  
 thus :  
 'You have our son ; touch not a hair  
 of his head ;  
 Render him up unscathed ; give him  
 your hand ;  
 Cleave to your contract — tho' indeed  
 we hear <sup>390</sup>  
 You hold the woman is the better  
 man ;  
 A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
 Would make all women kick against  
 their lords  
 Thro' all the world, and which might  
 well deserve  
 That we this night should pluck your  
 palace down ;  
 And we will do it, unless you send us  
 back  
 Our son, on the instant, whole.'  
 So far I read ;  
 And then stood up and spoke impet-  
 uously :

'O, not to pry and peer on your  
 reserve,  
 But led by golden wishes, and a  
 hope <sup>400</sup>  
 The child of regal compact, did I  
 break  
 Your precinct ; not a scorner of your  
 sex  
 But venerator, zealous it should be  
 All that it might be. Hear me, for I  
 bear,  
 Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er  
 your wrongs,  
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock  
 a life  
 Less mine than yours. My nurse  
 would tell me of you ;  
 I babbled for you, as babies for the  
 moon,  
 Vague brightness ; when a boy, you  
 stoop'd to me  
 From all high places, lived in all fair  
 lights, <sup>410</sup>  
 Came in long breezes rapt from inmost  
 south  
 And blown to inmost north ; at eve and  
 dawn  
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods ;  
 The leader wild-swan in among the  
 stars  
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of  
 glowworm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida.

Now,  
Because I would have reach'd you, had  
you been

Sphered up with Cassiopeia, or the  
enthroned

Persephone in Hades, now at length,  
Those winters of abeyance, all worn  
out,

A man I came to see you ; but, indeed,  
Not in this frequency can I lend full  
tongue,

O noble Ida, to those thoughts that  
wait

On you, their centre. Let me say but  
this,

That many a famous man and woman,  
town

And landskip, have I heard of, after  
seen

The dwarfs of presage ; tho' when  
known, there grew

Another kind of beauty in detail  
Made them worth knowing ; but in  
you I found

My boyish dream involved and daz-  
zled down

And master'd, while that after-beauty  
makes

Such head from act to act, from hour  
to hour,

Within me, that except you slay me  
here,

According to your bitter statute-book,  
I cannot cease to follow you, as they  
say

The seal does music ; who desire you  
more

Than growing boys their manhood ;  
dying lips,

With many thousand matters left to  
do,

The breath of life ; O, more than poor  
men wealth,

Than sick men health — yours, yours,  
not mine — but half

Without you ; with you, whole ; and  
of those halves

You worthiest ; and howe'er you block  
and bar

Your heart with system out from mine,  
I hold

That it becomes no man to nurse de-  
spair,

But in the teeth of clench'd antago-  
nisms

To follow up the worthiest till he  
die.

Yet that I came not all unauthorized  
Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee  
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught,  
and dash'd

Unopen'd at her feet. A tide of  
fierce

Invective seem'd to wait behind her  
lips,

As waits a river level with the dam  
Ready to burst and flood the world  
with foam ;

And so she would have spoken, but  
there rose

A hubbub in the court of half the  
maids

Gather'd together ; from the illumined  
hall

Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a  
press

Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded  
ewes,

And rainbow robes, and gems and gem-  
like eyes,

And gold and golden heads. They to  
and fro

Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some  
red, some pale,

All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the  
light,

Some crying there was an army in the  
land,

And some that men were in the very  
walls,

And some they cared not ; till a clamor  
grew

As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,  
And worse-confounded. High above

them stood

The placid marble Muses, looking  
peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head ;  
but rising up

Robed in the long night of her deep  
hair, so

To the open window moved, remain-  
ing there

Fixt like a beacon-tower above the  
waves

Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling  
eye

Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the  
light

Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd  
her arms and call'd  
Across the tumult, and the tumult  
fell.

'What fear ye, brawlers? am not I  
your Head?  
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks;  
I dare  
All these male thunderbolts; what is  
it ye fear?  
Peace! there are those to avenge us  
and they come; <sup>480</sup>  
If not, — myself were like enough, O  
girls,  
To unfurl the maiden banner of our  
rights,  
And clad in iron burst the ranks of  
war,

Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
Die; yet I blame you not so much for  
fear;  
Six thousand years of fear have made  
you that  
From which I would redeem you. But  
for those  
That stir this hubbub — you and you  
— I know  
Your faces there in the crowd — to-  
morrow morn  
We hold a great convention; then  
shall they <sup>490</sup>  
That love their voices more than duty,  
learn  
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in  
shame to live  
No wiser than their mothers, house  
hold stuff,



'They to and fro  
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale'

Live chattels, mincers of each other's  
fame,  
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the  
clown,  
The drunkard's football, laughing-  
stocks of Time,  
Whose brains are in their hands and  
in their heels,  
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to  
thrum,  
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and  
to scour,  
For ever slaves at home and fools  
abroad.' 500

She, ending, waved her hands;  
thereat the crowd  
Muttering, dissolved; then with a  
smile, that look'd  
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the  
cliff,  
When all the glens are drown'd in  
azure gloom  
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us  
and said:

'You have done well and like a  
gentleman,  
And like a prince; you have our  
thanks for all.  
And you look well too in your woman's  
dress.  
Well have you done and like a gentle-  
man.  
You saved our life; we owe you bitter  
thanks. 510  
Better have died and spilt our bones in  
the flood —  
Then men had said — but now — what  
hinders me  
To take such bloody vengeance on you  
both? —  
Yet since our father — wasps in our  
good hive,  
You would-be quenchers of the light  
to be,  
Barbarians, grosser than your native  
bears —  
O, would I had his sceptre for one  
hour!  
You that have dared to break our  
bound, and gull'd  
Our servants, wrong'd and lied and  
thwarted us —  
I wed with thee! I bound by precon-  
tract 520

Your bride, your bonds slave! not tho'  
all the gold  
That veins the world were pack'd to  
make your crown,  
And every spoken tongue should lord  
you. Sir,  
Your falsehood and yourself are hate-  
ful to us;  
I trample on your offers and on  
you.  
Begone; we will not look upon you  
more.  
Here, push them out at gates.'

In wrath she spake.  
Then those eight mighty daughters of  
the plough  
Bent their broad faces toward us and  
address'd  
Their motion. Twice I sought to plead  
my cause, 530  
But on my shoulder hung their heavy  
hands,  
The weight of destiny; so from her  
face  
They push'd us, down the steps, and  
thro' the court,  
And with grim laughter thrust us out  
at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a  
petty mound  
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights  
and heard  
The voices murmuring. While I lis-  
ten'd, came 540  
On a sudden the weird seizure and the  
doubt.  
I seem'd to move among a world of  
ghosts;  
The Princess with her monstrous  
woman-guard, 540  
The jest and earnest working side by  
side,  
The cataract and the tumult and the  
kings  
Were shadows; and the long fantastic  
night  
With all its doings had and had not  
been,  
And all things were and were not.  
This went by  
As strangely as it came, and on my  
spirits  
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy —  
Not long; I shook it off; for spite of  
doubts

And sudden ghostly shadowings I was  
 one  
 To whom the touch of all mischance  
 but came<sup>550</sup>  
 As night to him that sitting on a  
 hill  
 Sees the midsummer, midnight, Nor-  
 way sun  
 Set into sunrise ; then we moved away.

## INTERLUDE

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums  
 That beat to battle where he stands ;  
 Thy face across his fancy comes,  
 And gives the battle to his hands.  
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,  
 He sees his brood about thy knee ;  
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,  
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang. We thought her half-  
 possess'd,  
 She struck such warbling fury thro'  
 the words ;<sup>10</sup>  
 And, after, feigning pique at what she  
 call'd  
 The raillery, or grotesque, or false sub-  
 lime —  
 Like one that wishes at a dance to  
 change  
 The music — clapt her hands and cried  
 for war,  
 Or some grand fight to kill and make  
 an end.  
 And he that next inherited the tale,  
 Half turning to the broken statue,  
 said,  
 ' Sir Ralph has got your colors ; if I  
 prove  
 Your knight, and fight your battle,  
 what for me ?'  
 It chanced, her empty glove upon the  
 tomb<sup>20</sup>  
 Lay by her like a model of her  
 hand.  
 She took it and she flung it. ' Fight,'  
 she said,  
 ' And make us all we would be, great  
 and good.'  
 He knightlike in his cap instead of  
 casque,  
 A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the  
 hall,  
 Arranged the favor, and assumed the  
 Prince.

## V

Now, scarce three paces measured from  
 the mound.  
 We stumbled on a stationary voice,  
 And ' Stand, who goes ?' ' Two from  
 the palace,' I.  
 ' The second two ; they wait,' he said,  
 ' pass on ;  
 His Highness wakes ;' and one, that  
 clash'd in arms,  
 By glimmering lanes and walls of  
 canvas led  
 Threading the soldier-city, till we  
 heard  
 The drowsy folds of our great ensign  
 shake  
 From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial  
 tent  
 Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light  
 Dazed me, half-blind. I stood and  
 seem'd to hear,<sup>11</sup>  
 As in a poplar grove when a light  
 wind wakes  
 A lisping of the innumerable leaf and  
 dies,  
 Each hissing in his neighbor's ear ;  
 and then  
 A strangled titter, out of which there  
 brake  
 On all sides, clamoring etiquette to  
 death,  
 Unmeasured mirth ; while now the two  
 old kings  
 Began to wag their baldness up and  
 down,  
 The fresh young captains flash'd their  
 glittering teeth,  
 The huge bush-bearded barons heaved  
 and blew,<sup>20</sup>  
 And slain with laughter roll'd the  
 gilded squire.

At length my sire, his rough cheek  
 wet with tears,  
 Panted from weary sides, ' King, you  
 are free !  
 We did but keep you surety for our  
 son,  
 If this be he, — or a draggled mawkin,  
 thou,  
 That tends her bristled grunterns in the  
 sludge ;'  
 For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn  
 with briers,

More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,  
 And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel.  
 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm  
 A whisper'd jest to some one near him,<sup>30</sup>  
 'Look,  
 He has been among his shadows.'  
 'Satan take  
 The old women and their shadows!' —  
 thus the king  
 Roar'd — 'make yourself a man to  
 fight with men.'  
 Go; Cyril told us all.  
 As boys that slink  
 From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,  
 Away we stole, and transient in a trice  
 From what was left of faded woman-slough  
 To sheathing splendors and the golden scale  
 Of harness, issued in the sun, that now  
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the earth,<sup>41</sup>  
 And hit the Northern hills. Here  
 Cyril met us,  
 A little shy at first, but by and by  
 We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd  
 and given  
 For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,  
 whereon  
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled  
 away  
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the night  
 Had come on Psyche weeping: 'then  
 we fell  
 Into your father's hand, and there she  
 lies,  
 But will not speak nor stir.'  
 He show'd a tent  
 A stone-shot off; we enter'd in, and  
 there<sup>51</sup>  
 Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,  
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's  
 cloak,  
 Like some sweet sculpture draped  
 from head to foot,  
 And push'd by rude hands from its  
 pedestal,  
 All her fair length upon the ground  
 she lay;

And at her head a follower of the camp,  
 A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,  
 Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come,'  
 he whisper'd to her,<sup>60</sup>  
 'Lift up your head, sweet sister; lie  
 not thus.  
 What have you done but right? you  
 could not slay  
 Me, nor your prince; look up, be  
 comforted.  
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one  
 ought,  
 When fallen in darker ways.' And  
 likewise I:  
 'Be comforted; have I not lost her too,  
 In whose least act abides the nameless  
 charm  
 That none has else for me?' She  
 heard, she moved,  
 She moan'd a folded voice; and up  
 she sat,  
 And raised the cloak from brows as  
 pale and smooth<sup>70</sup>  
 As those that mourn half-shrouded  
 over death  
 In deathless marble. 'Her,' she said,  
 'my friend —  
 Parted from her — betray'd her cause  
 and mine —  
 Where shall I breathe? why kept ye  
 not your faith?  
 O base, and bad! what comfort? none  
 for me!  
 To whom remorseful Cyril, 'Yet I  
 pray  
 Take comfort; live, dear lady, for  
 your child!  
 At which she lifted up her voice and  
 cried:

'Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah,  
 my child,  
 My one sweet child, whom I shall see  
 no more!<sup>80</sup>  
 For now will cruel Ida keep her back;  
 And either she will die from want of  
 care,  
 Or sicken with ill-usage, when they  
 say  
 The child is hers — for every little  
 fault,



'All her fair length upon the ground she lay;  
And at her head a follower of the camp'

<p>The child is hers; and they will beat my girl Remembering her mother—O my flower! Or they will take her, they will make her hard, And she will pass me by in after-life With some cold reverence worse than were she dead. Ill mother that I was to leave her there, To lag behind, scared by the cry they made, The horror of the shame among them all. But I will go and sit beside the doors, And make a wild petition night and day, Until they hate to hear me like a wind Wailing for ever, till they open to me, And lay my little blossom at my feet, My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one child; And I will take her up and go my way, And satisfy my soul with kissing her. Ah! what might that man not de- serve of me</p>	<p>Who gave me back my child?' 'Be comforted,' Said Cyril, 'you shall have it;' but again, She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so, Like tender things that being caught feign death, Spoke not, nor stirr'd. By this a murmur ran Thro' all the camp, and inward raced the scouts With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand. We left her by the woman, and with out Found the gray kings at parle; and 'Look you,' cried My father, 'that our compact be ful- fill'd. You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you and man; She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him. But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire; She yields, or war.'</p>
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Then Gama turn'd to me :  
 'We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy  
 time  
 With our strange girl ; and yet they  
 say that still  
 You love her. Give us, then, your  
 mind at large :  
 How say you, war or not ?'  
 'Not war, if possible,  
 O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse  
 of war, <sup>120</sup>  
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled  
 year,  
 The smouldering homestead, and the  
 household flower  
 Torn from the lintel — all the common  
 wrong —  
 As smoke go up thro' which I loom to her  
 Three times a monster. Now she  
 lightens scorn  
 At him that mars her plan, but then  
 would hate —  
 And every voice she talk'd with ratify  
 it,  
 And every face she look'd on justify  
 it —  
 The general foe. More soluble is this  
 knot  
 By gentleness than war. I want her  
 love. <sup>130</sup>  
 What were I nigher this altho' we  
 dash'd  
 Your cities into shards with cata-  
 pults ? —  
 She would not love — or brought her  
 chain'd, a slave,  
 The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord ?  
 Not ever would she love, but brood-  
 ing turn  
 The book of scorn, till all my flitting  
 chance  
 Were caught within the record of her  
 wrongs  
 And crush'd to death ; and rather,  
 Sire, than this  
 I would the old god of war himself  
 were dead,  
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills, <sup>140</sup>  
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs  
 of wreck,  
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd  
 in ice,  
 Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spake  
 My father : 'Tut, you know them  
 not, the girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost  
 think  
 That idiot legend credible. Look you,  
 sir !  
 Man is the hunter ; woman is his game.  
 The sleek and shining creatures of the  
 chase,  
 We hunt them for the beauty of their  
 skins ;  
 They love us for it, and we ride them  
 down. <sup>150</sup>  
 Wheedling and siding with them !  
 Out ! for shame !  
 Boy, there's no rose that's half so  
 dear to them  
 As he that does the thing they dare  
 not do,  
 Breathing and sounding beauteous  
 battle, comes  
 With the air of the trumpet round  
 him, and leaps in  
 Among the women, snares them by  
 the score  
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho'  
 dash'd with death  
 He reddens what he kisses. Thus I  
 won  
 Your mother, a good mother, a good  
 wife,  
 Worth winning ; but this firebrand —  
 gentleness <sup>160</sup>  
 To such as her ! if Cyril spake her  
 true,  
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
 Were wisdom to it.'

'Yea, but, Sire,' I cried,  
 'Wild natures need wise curbs. The  
 soldier ? No !  
 What dares not Ida do that she should  
 prize  
 The soldier ? I beheld her, when she  
 rose  
 The yesternight, and storming in ex-  
 tremes  
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance  
 down  
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd  
 the death, <sup>170</sup>  
 No, not the soldier's ; yet I hold her,  
 king,  
 True woman ; but you clash them all  
 in one,  
 That have as many differences as we.  
 The violet varies from the lily as  
 far

As oak from elm. One loves the soldier, one  
 The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,  
 And some unworthily; their sinless faith,  
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
 Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they need  
 More breadth of culture. Is not Ida right? <sup>180</sup>  
 They worth it? truer to the law within? Severer in the logic of a life?  
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences Of earth and heaven? and she of whom you speak,  
 My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
 Creation minted in the golden moods Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,  
 But pure as lines of green that streak the white  
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,  
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man, Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire, <sup>191</sup>  
 But whole and one; and take them all-in-all,  
 Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,  
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as right  
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs  
 As dues of Nature. To our point; not war,  
 Lest I lose all.'  
 'Nay, nay, you spake but sense,' Said Gama. 'We remember love ourself  
 In our sweet youth; we did not rate him then  
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows. <sup>200</sup>  
 You talk almost like Ida; *she* can talk; And there is something in it as you say: But you talk kindlier; we esteem you for it. —  
 He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,  
 I would he had our daughter. For the rest,  
 Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,

Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—  
 We would do much to gratify your Prince—  
 We pardon it; and for your ingress here  
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land, <sup>210</sup>  
 You did but come as goblins in the night,  
 Nor in the furrow broke the plough man's head,  
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,  
 Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream.  
 But let your Prince — our royal word upon it,  
 He comes back safe — ride with us to our lines,  
 And speak with Arac. Arac's word is thrice  
 As ours with Ida; something may be done —  
 I know not what — and ours shall see us friends.  
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will, <sup>220</sup>  
 Follow us. Who knows? we four may build some plan  
 Foursquare to opposition.'  
 Here he reach'd  
 White hands of farewell to my sire, who growl'd  
 An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,  
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns  
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring  
 In every bole, a song on every spray  
 Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke  
 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
 In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed <sup>231</sup>  
 All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode;  
 And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews  
 Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air  
 On our mail'd heads. But other thoughts than peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embat-  
tled squares  
And squadrons of the Prince, tramping the flowers  
With clamor; for among them rose a  
cry  
As if to greet the king; they made a  
halt;  
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their  
arms; the drum <sup>240</sup>  
Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the  
martial fife;  
And in the blast and bray of the long  
horn  
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
The banner. Anon to meet us lightly  
pranced  
Three captains out; nor ever had I seen  
Such thews of men. The midmost and  
the highest  
Was Arac; all about his motion  
clung  
The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
Of the East, that play'd upon them,  
made them glance  
Like those three stars of the airy  
Giant's zone, <sup>250</sup>  
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty  
dark;  
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,  
And bickers into red and emerald,  
shone  
Their morions, wash'd with morning,  
as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first  
I heard  
War-music, felt the blind wild-beast  
of force,  
Whose home is in the sinews of a  
man,  
Stir in me as to strike. Then took the  
king  
His three broad sons; with now a  
wandering hand  
And now a pointed finger, told them  
all. <sup>260</sup>  
A common light of smiles at our dis-  
guise  
Broke from their lips, and, ere the  
windy jest  
Had labor'd down within his ample  
lungs,  
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in  
words:

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he  
himself  
Your captive, yet my father wills not  
war!  
And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I,  
war or no?  
But then this question of your troth  
remains;  
And there's a downright honest mean-  
ing in her. <sup>270</sup>  
She flies too high, she flies too high!  
and yet  
She ask'd but space and fair-play for  
her scheme;  
She prest and prest it on me—I myself,  
What know I of these things? but, life  
and soul!  
I thought her half-right talking of her  
wrongs;  
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what  
of that?  
I take her for the flower of womankind,  
And so I often told her, right or wrong;  
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those  
she loves,  
And, right or wrong, I care not; this  
is all, <sup>280</sup>  
I stand upon her side; she made me  
swear it—  
'Sdeath!—and with solemn rites by  
candle-light—  
Swear by Saint something—I forget  
her name—  
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest  
men;  
*She* was a princess too; and so I swore.  
Come, this is all; she will not; waive  
your claim.  
If not, the foughten field, what else,  
at once  
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's  
will.'

I lagg'd in answer, loth to render up  
My precontract, and loth by brainless  
war <sup>290</sup>  
To cleave the rift of difference deeper  
yet;  
Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
And fingering at the hair about his lip,  
To prick us on to combat, 'Like to  
like!  
The woman's garment hid the woman's  
heart.'  
A taunt that clench'd his purpose like  
a blow!

For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-  
scoff,  
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon  
the point  
Where idle boys are cowards to their  
shame,  
'Decide it here; why not? we are three  
to three.' 300

Then spake the third: 'But three  
to three? no more?  
No more, and in our noble sister's  
cause?  
More, more, for honor! every captain  
waits  
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.  
More, more, some fifty on a side, that  
each  
May breathe himself, and quick! by  
overthrow  
Of these or those, the question settled  
die.'

'Yea,' answer'd I, 'for this wild  
wreath of air,  
This flake of rainbow flying on the  
highest  
Foam of men's deeds—this honor, if  
ye will. 310  
It needs must be for honor if at all;  
Since, what decision? if we fail we  
fail,  
And if we win we fail; she would not  
keep  
Her compact.' 'Sdeath! but we will  
send to her,'  
Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she  
should  
Bide by this issue; let our missive  
thro',  
And you shall have her answer by the  
word.'

'Boys!' shriek'd the old king, but  
vainlier than a hen  
To her false daughters in the pool;  
for none  
Regard; neither seem'd there more  
to say. 320  
Back rode we to my father's camp,  
and found  
He thrice had sent a herald to the  
gates,  
To learn if Ida yet would cede our  
claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells

With her own people's life; three  
times he went.  
The first, he blew and blew, but none  
appear'd;  
He batter'd at the doors, none came;  
the next,  
An awful voice within had warn'd  
him thence;  
The third, and those eight daughters  
of the plough  
Came sallying thro' the gates, and  
caught his hair, 330  
And so belabor'd him on rib and cheek  
They made him wild. Not less one  
glance he caught  
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there  
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose,  
firm  
Tho' compass'd by two armies and  
the noise  
Of arms; and standing like a stately  
pine  
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
When storm is on the heights, and  
right and left  
Suck'd from the dark heart of the  
long hills roll  
The torrents, dash'd to the vale; and  
yet her will 340  
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I  
was pledged  
To fight in tourney for my bride, he  
clash'd  
His iron palms together with a cry;  
Himself would tilt it out among the  
lads;  
But overborne by all his bearded lords  
With reasons drawn from age and  
state, perforce  
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce  
demur;  
And many a bold knight started up  
in heat,  
And sware to combat for my claim  
till death. 350

All on this side the palace ran the  
field  
Flat to the garden-wall; and likewise  
here,  
Above the garden's glowing blossom-  
belts,  
A column'd entry shone and marble  
stairs,

And great bronze valves, emboss'd  
 with Tomyris  
 And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
 But now fast barr'd. So here upon  
 the flat  
 All that long morn the lists were  
 hammer'd up,  
 And all that morn the heralds to and  
 fro,  
 With message and defiance, went and  
 came; 360  
 Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
 But shaken here and there, and roll-  
 ing words  
 Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read:

'O brother, you have known the  
 pangs we felt,  
 What heats of indignation when we  
 heard  
 Of those that iron-cramp'd their wo-  
 men's feet;  
 Of lands in which at the altar the  
 poor bride  
 Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift  
 a scourge;  
 Of living hearts that crack within the  
 fire  
 Where smoulder their dead despots;  
 and of those, — 370  
 Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity,  
 fling  
 Their pretty maids in the running  
 flood, and swoops  
 The vulture, beak and talon, at the  
 heart  
 Made for all noble motion. And I saw  
 That equal baseness lived in sleeker  
 times  
 With smother men; the old leaven  
 leaven'd all;  
 Millions of throats would bawl for  
 civil rights,  
 No woman named; therefore I set my  
 face  
 Against all men, and lived but for  
 mine own.  
 Far off from men I built a fold for  
 them; 380  
 I stored it full of rich memorial;  
 I fenced it round with gallant insti-  
 tutes,  
 And biting laws to scare the beasts of  
 prey,  
 And prosper'd, till a rout of saucy  
 boys

Brake on us at our books, and marr'd  
 our peace,  
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering I  
 know not what  
 Of insolence and love, some pretext  
 held  
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
 Seal'd not the bond — the striplings!  
 — for their sport! —  
 I tamed my leopards; shall I not tame  
 these? 390  
 Or you? or I? for since you think me  
 touch'd  
 In honor — what! I would not aught  
 of false —  
 Is not our cause pure? and whereas I  
 know  
 Your prowess, Arac, and what mo-  
 ther's blood  
 You draw from, fight! You failing,  
 I abide  
 What end soever; fail you will not.  
 Still,  
 Take not his life, he risk'd it for my  
 own;  
 His mother lives. Yet whatsoe'er you  
 do,  
 Fight and fight well; strike and strike  
 home. O dear  
 Brothers, the woman's angel guards  
 you, you 400  
 The sole men to be mingled with our  
 cause,  
 The sole men we shall prize in the  
 after-time,  
 Your very armor hallow'd, and your  
 statues  
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gadfly  
 brush'd aside,  
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
 And mould a generation strong to  
 move  
 With claim on claim from right to  
 right, till she  
 Whose name is yoked with children's  
 know herself;  
 And Knowledge in our own land  
 make her free,  
 And, ever following those two crowned  
 twins, 410  
 Commerce and Conquest, shower the  
 fiery grain  
 Of freedom broadcast over all that  
 orbs  
 Between the Northern and the South  
 ern morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across  
 the rest :  
 'See that there be no traitors in your  
 camp.  
 We seem a nest of traitors—none to  
 trust  
 Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-  
 plague of men !  
 Almost our maids were better at their  
 homes,  
 Than thus man-girdled here. Indeed  
 I think  
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
 Of one unworthy mother, which she  
 left. <sup>421</sup>  
 She shall not have it back; the child  
 shall grow  
 To prize the authentic mother of her  
 mind.  
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
 This morning; there the tender orphan  
 hands  
 Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm  
 from thence  
 The wrath I nursed against the world.  
 Farewell.'

I ceased; he said, 'Stubborn, but  
 she may sit  
 Upon a king's right hand in thunder-  
 storms,  
 And breed up warriors! See now,  
 tho' yourself <sup>430</sup>  
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to  
 sloughs  
 That swallow common sense, the  
 spindling king,  
 This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.  
 When the man wants weight, the wo-  
 man takes it up,  
 And topples down the scales; but  
 this is fixt  
 As are the roots of earth and base of  
 all,—  
 Man for the field and woman for the  
 hearth;  
 Man for the sword, and for the needle  
 she;  
 Man with the head, and woman with  
 the heart;  
 Man to command, and woman to  
 obey; <sup>440</sup>  
 All else confusion. Look you! the  
 gray mare  
 Is ill to live with, when her whinny  
 shrills

From tile to scullery, and her small  
 Goodman  
 Shrinks in his arm-chair while the  
 fires of hell  
 Mix with his hearth. But you—she's  
 yet a colt—  
 Take, break her; strongly groom'd  
 and straitly curb'd  
 She might not rank with those detest-  
 able  
 That let the bantling scald at home,  
 and brawl  
 Their rights or wrongs like potherbs  
 in the street.  
 They say she's comely; there's the  
 fairer chance. <sup>450</sup>  
 / like her none the less for rating at  
 her!  
 Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
 But suffers change of frame. A lusty  
 brace  
 Of twins may weed her of her folly.  
 Boy,  
 The bearing and the training of a child  
 Is woman's wisdom.'  
 Thus the hard old king,  
 I took my leave, for it was nearly  
 noon;  
 I pored upon her letter which I held,  
 And on the little clause, 'take not his  
 life;'  
 I mused on that wild morning in the  
 woods, <sup>460</sup>  
 And on the 'Follow, follow, thou  
 shalt win;'  
 I thought on all the wrathful king  
 had said,  
 And how the strange betrothment  
 was to end.  
 Then I remember'd that burnt sor-  
 cerer's curse  
 That one should fight with shadows  
 and should fall;  
 And like a flash the weird affection  
 came.  
 King, camp, and college turn'd to hol-  
 low shows;  
 I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,  
 And doing battle with forgotten  
 ghosts,  
 To dream myself the shadow of a  
 dream; <sup>470</sup>  
 And ere I woke it was the point of  
 noon,  
 The lists were ready. Empanoplied  
 and plumed

We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
 Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet  
     blared  
 At the barrier like a wild horn in a  
     land  
 Of echoes, and a moment, and once  
     more  
 The trumpet, and again ; at which the  
     storm  
 Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge  
     of spears  
 And riders front to front, until they  
     closed  
 In conflict with the crash of shivering  
     points,  
 And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, <sup>480</sup>  
     I dream'd  
 Of fighting. On his haunches rose the  
     steed,  
 And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
 And out of stricken helmets sprang the  
     fire.  
 Part sat like rocks ; part reel'd but  
     kept their seats ;  
 Part roll'd on the earth and rose again  
     and drew ;  
 Part stumbled mixt with floundering  
     horses. Down  
 From those two bulks at Arac's side,  
     and down  
 From Arac's arm, as from a giant's  
     flail,  
 The large blows rain'd, as here and  
     everywhere <sup>490</sup>  
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing  
     lists,  
 And all the plain — brand, mace, and  
     shaft, and shield —  
 Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil  
     bang'd  
 With hammers ; till I thought, can  
     this be he  
 From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if this  
     be so,  
 The mother makes us most — and in  
     my dream  
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-  
     front  
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies'  
     eyes,  
 And highest, among the statues,  
     statue-like,  
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,  
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watch-  
     ing us, <sup>501</sup>  
 A single band of gold about her hair,

Like a saint's glory up in heaven ; but  
     she,  
 No saint — inexorable — no tender-  
     ness —  
 Too hard, too cruel. Yet she sees me  
     fight,  
 Yea, let her see me fall. With that I  
     drave  
 Among the thickest and bore down a  
     prince,  
 And Cyril one. Yea, let me make my  
     dream  
 All that I would. But that large-  
     moulded man,  
 If his visage all agrin as at a wake, <sup>510</sup>  
 Made at me thro' the press, and, stag-  
     gering back  
 With stroke on stroke the horse and  
     horseman, came  
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the  
     drains,  
 And shadowing down the champaign  
     till it strikes  
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and  
     cracks, and splits,  
 And twists the grain with such a roar  
     that Earth  
 Reels, and the herdsman cry ; for every-  
     thing  
 Gave way before him. Only Florian,  
     he  
 That loved me closer than his own  
     right eye, <sup>520</sup>  
 Thrust in between ; but Arac rode him  
     down.  
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the  
     Prince,  
 With Psyche's color round his helmet,  
     tough,  
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at  
     arms ;  
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that  
     smote  
 And threw him. Last I spurr'd ; I  
     felt my veins  
 Stretch with fierce heat ; a moment  
     hand to hand,  
 And sword to sword, and horse to  
     horse we hung,  
 Till I struck out and shouted ; the blade  
     glanced,  
 I did but shear a feather, and dream  
     and truth <sup>530</sup>  
 Flow'd from me ; darkness closed me,  
     and I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead;  
 She nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry.  
 All her maidens, watching, said,  
 'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
 Truest friend and noblest foe;  
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
 Lightly to the warrior slept,  
 Took the face-cloth from the face;  
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
 Set his child upon her knee —  
 Like summer tempest came her tears —  
 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

## VI

My dream had never died or lived  
 again ;

510

As in some mystic middle state I lay  
 Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard  
 Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all  
 So often that I speak as having seen.



'Like summer tempest came her tears—  
 "Sweet my child, I live for thee"'



For so it seem'd, or so they said to  
me,  
That all things grew more tragic and  
more strange;  
That when our side was vanquish'd and  
my cause  
For ever lost, there went up a great  
cry,  
'The Prince is slain!' My father heard  
and ran<sup>10</sup>  
In on the lists, and there unlaced my  
casque  
And grovell'd on my body, and after  
him  
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
With Psyche's babe in arm; there on  
the roofs  
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she  
sang.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen:  
the seed,  
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a  
bulk  
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side<sup>20</sup>  
A thousand arms and rushes to the sun.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen  
they came;  
The leaves were wet with women's tears;  
they heard  
A noise of songs they would not understand;  
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
And would have strown it, and are fallen  
themselves.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen:  
they came,  
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!  
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,  
And shape it plank and beam for roof and  
floor,<sup>30</sup>  
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen;  
they struck;  
With their own blows they hurt themselves,  
nor knew  
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain;  
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder  
blade.

'Our enemies have fallen, but this shall  
grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power; and  
roll'd

With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the  
fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.<sup>41</sup>

'And now, O maids, behold our  
sanctuary  
Is violate, our laws broken; fear we not  
To break them more in their behoof,  
whose arms  
Champion'd our cause and won it with  
a day  
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual  
feast,  
When dames and heroines of the  
golden year  
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of  
Spring,  
To rain an April of ovation round<sup>50</sup>  
Their statues, borne aloft, the three;  
but come,  
We will be liberal, since our rights are  
won.  
Let them not lie in the tents with  
coarse mankind,  
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer  
these  
The brethren of our blood and cause,  
that there  
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender  
ministries  
Of female hands and hospitality.'

She spoke, and with the babe yet in  
her arms,  
Descending, burst the great bronze  
valves, and led  
A hundred maids in train across the  
park.<sup>60</sup>  
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed,  
on they came,  
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest.  
By them went  
The enamor'd air sighing, and on their  
curls  
From the high tree the blossom wav-  
ering fell,  
And over them the tremulous isles of  
light  
Slided, they moving under shade; but  
Blanche  
At distance follow'd. So they came:  
anon  
Thro' open field into the lists they  
wound  
Timorously; and as the leader of the  
herd

That holds a stately fretwork to the  
 sun,  
 And follow'd up by a hundred airy<sup>70</sup>  
 does,  
 Steps with a tender foot, light as on  
 air,  
 The lovely, lordly creature floated on  
 To where her wounded brethren lay;  
 there stay'd,  
 Knelt on one knee, — the child on one,  
 — and prest  
 Their hands, and call'd them dear de-  
 liverers,  
 And happy warriors, and immortal  
 names,  
 And said, 'You shall not lie in the  
 tents, but here,  
 And nursed by those for whom you  
 fought, and served  
 With female hands and hospitality.' <sup>80</sup>

Then, whether moved by this, or  
 was it chance,  
 She past my way. Up started from  
 my side  
 The old lion, glaring with his whelp-  
 less eye,  
 Silent; but when she saw me lying  
 stark,  
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly  
 pale,  
 Cold even to her, she sigh'd; and  
 when she saw  
 The haggard father's face and rever-  
 end beard  
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the  
 blood  
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of  
 pain  
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her  
 forehead past  
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and<sup>90</sup>  
 she said:  
 'He saved my life; my brother slew  
 him for it.'  
 No more; at which the king in bitter  
 scorn  
 Drew from my neck the painting and  
 the tress,  
 And held them up. She saw them,  
 and a day  
 Rose from the distance on her memory,  
 When the good queen, her mother,  
 shore the tress  
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady  
 Blanche.

And then once more she look'd at my  
 pale face;  
 Till understanding all the foolish work<sup>99</sup>  
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
 Her iron will was broken in her mind;  
 Her noble heart was molten in her  
 breast;  
 She bow'd, she set the child on the  
 earth; she laid  
 A feeling finger on my brows, and  
 presently  
 'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives; he is  
 not dead!  
 O, let me have him with my brethren  
 here  
 In our own palace; we will tend on  
 him  
 Like one of these; if so, by any  
 means,  
 To lighten this great clog of thanks,  
 that make  
 Our progress falter to the woman's<sup>110</sup>  
 goal.'

She said; but at the happy word  
 'he lives!'  
 My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my  
 wounds.  
 So those two foes above my fallen  
 life,  
 With brow to brow like night and  
 evening mixt  
 Their dark and gray, while Psyche  
 ever stole  
 A little nearer, till the babe that by  
 us,  
 Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden  
 brede,  
 Lay like a new-fallen meteor on the  
 grass,  
 Uncared for, spied its mother and<sup>120</sup>  
 began  
 A blind and babbling laughter, and to  
 dance  
 Its body, and reach its fatling inno-  
 cent arms  
 And lazy lingering fingers. She the  
 appeal  
 Brook'd not, but clamoring out 'Mine  
 — mine — not yours!  
 It is not yours, but mine; give me the  
 child!  
 Ceased all on tremble; piteous was  
 the cry.  
 So stood the unhappy mother open-  
 mouth'd,

And turn'd each face her way. Wan  
     was her cheek  
 With hollow watch, her blooming  
     mantle torn,  
 Red grief and mother's hunger in her  
     eye,  
 And down dead-heavy sank her curls,  
     and half  
 The sacred mother's bosom, panting,  
     burst  
 The laces toward her babe; but she  
     nor cared  
 Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida  
     heard,  
 Look'd up, and rising slowly from me,  
     stood  
 Erect and silent, striking with her  
     glance  
 The mother, me, the child. But he  
     that lay  
 Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
 Trail'd himself up on one knee; then  
     he drew  
 Her robe to meet his lips, and down  
     she look'd  
 At the arm'd man sideways, pitying  
     as it seem'd,  
 Or self-involved; but when she learnt  
     his face,  
 Remembering his ill-omen'd song,  
     arose  
 Once more thro' all her height, and  
     o'er him grew  
 Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
 When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and  
     he said:  
  
 'O fair and strong and terrible!  
     Lioness  
 That with your long locks play the  
     lion's mane!  
 But Love and Nature, these are two  
     more terrible  
 And stronger. See, your foot is on  
     our necks,  
 We vanquish'd, you the victor of your  
     will.  
 What would you more? give her the  
     child! remain  
 Orb'd in your isolation; he is dead,  
 Or all as dead: henceforth we let you  
     be.  
 Win you the hearts of women; and  
     beware  
 Lest, where you seek the common  
     love of these,

The common hate with the revolving  
     wheel  
 Should drag you down, and some  
     great Nemesis  
 Break from a darken'd future, crown'd  
     with fire,  
 And tread you out for ever. But  
     howsoe'er  
 Fixt in yourself, never in your own  
     arms  
 To hold your own, deny not hers to  
     her,  
 Give her the child! O, if, I say, you  
     keep  
 One pulse that beats true woman, if  
     you loved  
 The breast that fed or arm that dan-  
     dled you,  
 Or own one port of sense not flint to  
     prayer,  
 Give her the child! or if you scorn to  
     lay it,  
 Yourself, in hands so lately claspt  
     with yours,  
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one  
     fault  
 The tenderness, not yours, that could  
     not kill,  
 Give me it; I will give it her.'

He said.

At first her eye with slow dilation  
     roll'd  
 Dry flame, she listening; after sank  
     and sank  
 And, into mournful twilight mellow-  
     ing, dwelt  
 Full on the child. She took it -  
     'Pretty bud!  
 Lily of the vale! half-open'd bell of  
     the woods!  
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when  
     a world  
 Of traitorous friend and broken system  
     made  
 No purple in the distance, mystery,  
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, fare-  
     well!  
 These men are hard upon us as of old,  
 We two must part; and yet how fain  
     was I  
 To dream thy cause embraced in mine,  
     to think  
 I might be something to thee, when I  
     felt  
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren  
     breast



'Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,  
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough'

In the dead prime; but may thy mother prove  
As true to thee as false, false, false to me!  
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it  
Gentle as freedom' — here she kiss'd it; then —  
'All good go with thee! take it, sir,'  
and so <sup>190</sup>  
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,  
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang  
To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks;  
Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,  
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,  
And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,

And hid her bosom with it; after that  
Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

'We two were friends: I go to mine own land  
For ever. Find some other; as for me <sup>200</sup>  
I scarce am fit for your great plans:  
yet speak to me,  
Say one soft word and let me part forgiven.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.  
Then Arac: 'Ida — 'sdeath! you blame the man;  
You wrong yourselves — the woman is so hard  
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!

I am your warrior; I and mine have  
fought

Your battle. Kiss her; take her hand,  
she weeps.

'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice  
o'er than see it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the  
ground. <sup>210</sup>

And reddening in the furrows of his  
chin,

And moved beyond his custom, Gama  
said:

'I've heard that there is iron in the  
blood,

And I believe it. Not one word? not  
one?

Whence drew you this steel temper?  
not from me,

Not from your mother, now a saint  
with saints.

She said you had a heart—I heard  
her say it—

"Our Ida has a heart"—just ere she  
died—

"But see that some one with authority  
Be near her still;" and I—I sought  
for one— <sup>220</sup>

All people said she had authority—  
The Lady Blanche—much profit!

Not one word;  
No! tho' your father sues. See how  
you stand

Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good  
knights maim'd,

I trust that there is no one hurt to  
death,

For your wild whim. And was it then  
for this,

Was it for this we gave our palace  
up,

Where we withdrew from summer  
heats and state,

And had our wine and chess beneath  
the planes,

And many a pleasant hour with her  
that's gone, <sup>230</sup>

Ere you were born to vex us? Is it  
kind?

Speak to her, I say; is this not she of  
whom,

When first she came, all flush'd you  
said to me,

Now had you got a friend of your  
own age,

Now could you share your thought,  
now should men see

Two women faster welded in one  
love

Than pairs of wedlock? she you walk'd  
with, she

You talk'd with, whole nights long,  
up in the tower,

Of sine and arc, spheroid and azi-  
muth,

And right ascension, heaven knows  
what; and now <sup>240</sup>

A word, but one, one little kindly  
word,

Not one to spare her! Out upon you,  
flint!

You love nor her, nor me, nor any;  
nay,

You shame your mother's judgment  
too. Not one?

You will not? well—no heart have  
you, or such

As fancies like the vermin in a nut  
Have fretted all to dust and bitter-  
ness.'

So said the small king moved beyond  
his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of  
her force

By many a varying influence and so  
long. <sup>250</sup>

Down thro' her limbs a drooping  
languor wept;

Her head a little bent; and on her  
mouth

A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded  
moon

In a still water. Then brake out my  
sire,

Lifting his grim head from my  
wounds: 'O you,

Woman, whom we thought woman  
even now,

And were half fool'd to let you tend  
our son,

Because he might have wish'd it—but  
we see

The accomplice of your madness un-  
forgiven,

And think that you might mix his  
draught with death, <sup>260</sup>

When your skies change again; the  
rougher hand

Is safer. On to the tents; take up the  
Prince.'

He rose, and while each ear was  
 prick'd to attend  
 A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd  
 her broke  
 A genial warmth and light once more,  
 and shone  
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.  
 'Come hither,  
 O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace  
 me, come,  
 Quick while I melt; make reconcile-  
 ment sure  
 With one that cannot keep her mind  
 an hour;  
 Come to the hollow heart they slander  
 so! . 270  
 Kiss and be friends, like children being  
 chid!  
 I seem no more, I want forgiveness  
 too;  
 I should have had to do with none  
 but maids,  
 That have no links with men. Ah  
 false but dear,  
 Dear traitor, too much loved, why? —  
 why? — yet see  
 Before these kings we embrace you yet  
 once more  
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
 And trust, not love, you less.  
 And now, O Sire,  
 Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait  
 upon him,  
 Like mine own brother. For my debt  
 to him, 280  
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I  
 know it.  
 Taunt me no more; yourself and yours  
 shall have  
 Free adit; we will scatter all our  
 maids  
 Till happier times each to her proper  
 hearth.  
 What use to keep them here — now?  
 grant my prayer.  
 Help, father, brother, help; speak to  
 the king;  
 Thaw this male nature to some touch  
 of that  
 Which kills me with myself, and  
 drags me down  
 From my fixt height to mob me up  
 with all  
 The soft and milky rabble of woman-  
 kind, 290  
 Poor weakling even as they are.'

Passionate tears  
 Follow'd; the king replied not; Cyril  
 said:  
 'Your brother, lady, — Florian, — ask  
 for him  
 Of your great Head — for he is  
 wounded too —  
 That you may tend upon him with the  
 Prince.'  
 'Ay, so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,  
 'Our laws are broken; let him enter  
 too.'  
 Then Violet, she that sang the mourn-  
 ful song,  
 And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,  
 Petition'd too for him. 'Ay, so,' she  
 said, 300  
 'I stagger in the stream; I cannot keep  
 My heart an eddy from the brawling  
 hour.  
 We break our laws with ease, but let  
 it be.'  
 'Ay, so?' said Blanche: 'Amazed am  
 I to hear  
 Your Highness; but your Highness  
 breaks with ease  
 The law your Highness did not make;  
 't was I.  
 I had been wedded wife, I knew man-  
 kind,  
 And block'd them out; but these men  
 came to woo  
 Your Highness, — verily I think to  
 win.'  
 So she, and turn'd askance a wintry  
 eye; 310  
 But Ida, with a voice that, like a bell  
 Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling  
 tower,  
 Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and  
 scorn:  
 'Fling our doors wide! all, all, not  
 one, but all,  
 Not only he, but by my mother's soul,  
 Whatever man lies wounded, friend or  
 foe,  
 Shall enter, if he will! Let our girls  
 flit,  
 Till the storm die! but had you stood  
 by us,  
 The roar that breaks the Pharos from  
 his base  
 Had left us rock. She fain would sting  
 us too, 320

But shall not. Pass, and mingle with  
your likes.  
We brook no further insult, but are  
gone.'

She turn'd; the very nape of her  
white neck  
Was rosed with indignation; but the  
Prince  
Her brother came; the king her father  
charm'd  
Her wounded soul with words; nor  
did mine own  
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his  
hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead  
weights, and bare  
Straight to the doors; to them the  
doors gave way  
Groaning, and in the vestal entry  
shriek'd 330  
The virgin marble under iron heels.  
And on they moved and gain'd the  
hall, and there  
Rest'd; but great the crush was, and  
each base,  
To left and right, of those tall col-  
umns drown'd  
In silken fluctuation and the swarm  
Of female whisperers. At the further  
end  
Was Ida by the throne, the two great  
cats  
Close by her, like supporters on a  
shield,  
Bow-back'd with fear; but in the  
centre stood  
The common men with rolling eyes;  
amazed 340  
They glared upon the women, and  
aghast  
The women stared at these, all silent,  
save  
When armor clash'd or jingled, while  
the day,  
Descending, struck athwart the hall,  
and shot  
A flying splendor out of brass and  
steel,  
That o'er the statues leapt from head  
to head,  
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,  
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on  
flame;  
And now and then an echo started up,

And shuddering fled from room to  
room, and died 350  
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice  
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance;  
And me they bore up the broad stairs,  
and thro'  
The long-laid galleries past a hundred  
doors  
To one deep chamber shut from sound,  
and due  
To languid limbs and sickness, left  
me in it;  
And others otherwhere they laid; and  
all  
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof  
And chariot, many a maiden passing  
home  
Till happier times; but some were  
left of those 360  
Held sagest, and the great lords out  
and in,  
From those two hosts that lay beside  
the wall,  
Walk'd at their will, and everything  
was changed.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the  
sea;  
The cloud may stoop from heaven and  
take the shape,  
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;  
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I  
give?  
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye: 370  
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!  
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are  
seal'd;  
I strove against the stream and all in vain;  
Let the great river take me to the main.  
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;  
Ask me no more.

## VII

So was their sanctuary violated,  
So their fair college turn'd to hospital,  
At first with all confusion; by and by  
Sweet order lived again with other  
laws,  
A kindlier influence reign'd, and  
everywhere

Low voices with the ministering hand  
 Hung round the sick. The maidens  
     came, they talk'd,  
 They sang, they read ; till she not fair  
     began  
 To gather light, and she that was be-  
     came  
 Her former beauty treble ; and to and  
     fro<sup>10</sup>  
 With books, with flowers, with angel  
     offices,  
 Like creatures native unto gracious  
     act,  
 And in their own clear element, they  
     moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
 And hatred of her weakness, blent  
     with shame.  
 Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke ;  
     but oft  
 Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone  
     for hours  
 On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of  
     men  
 Darkening her female field. Void  
     was her use,  
 And she as one that climbs a peak to  
     gaze<sup>20</sup>  
 O'er land and main, and sees a great  
     black cloud  
 Drag inward from the deeps, a wall  
     of night,  
 Blot out the slope of sea from verge  
     to shore,  
 And suck the blinding splendor from  
     the sand,  
 And quenching lake by lake and tarn  
     by tarn  
 Expunge the world ; so fared she gaz-  
     ing there,  
 So blacken'd all her world in secret,  
     blank  
 And waste it seem'd and vain ; till  
     down she came,  
 And found fair peace once more among  
     the sick.

And twilight dawn'd ; and morn by  
     morn the lark<sup>30</sup>  
 Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,  
     but I  
 Lay silent in the muffled cage of  
     life.  
 And twilight gloom'd, and broader-  
     grown the bowers

Drew the great night into themselves,  
     and heaven,  
 Star after star, arose and fell ; but I,  
 Deeper than those weird doubts could  
     reach me, lay  
 Quite sunder'd from the moving Uni-  
     verse,  
 Nor knew what eye was on me, nor  
     the hand  
 That nursed me, more than infants in  
     their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian ; with  
     her oft<sup>40</sup>  
 Melissa came, for Blanche had gone,  
     but left  
 Her child among us, willing she should  
     keep  
 Court-favor. Here and there the small  
     bright head,  
 A light of healing, glanced about the  
     couch,  
 Or thro' the parted silks the tender  
     face  
 Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded  
     man  
 With blush and smile, a medicine in  
     themselves  
 To wile the length from languorous  
     hours, and draw  
 The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it  
     strange that soon  
 He rose up whole, and those fair char-  
     ities<sup>50</sup>  
 Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd  
     that hearts  
 So gentle, so employ'd, should close  
     in love,  
 Than when two dewdrops on the  
     petal shake  
 To the same sweet air, and tremble  
     deeper down,  
 And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit  
     obtain'd  
 At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche  
     had sworn  
 That after that dark night among the  
     fields  
 She needs must wed him for her own  
     good name ;  
 Not tho' he built upon the babe re-  
     stored ;<sup>60</sup>  
 Not tho' she liked him, yielded she,  
     but fear'd



To incense the Head once more; till  
 on a day  
 When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind  
 Seen but of Psyche; on her foot she  
 hung  
 A moment, and she heard, at which  
 her face  
 A little flush'd, and she past on; but  
 each  
 Assumed from thence a half-consent  
 involved  
 In stillness, plighted troth, and were  
 at peace.

Nor only these; Love in the sacred  
 halls  
 Held carnival at will, and flying  
 struck  
 With showers of random sweet on  
 maid and man.  
 Nor did her father cease to press my  
 claim,  
 Nor did mine own now reconciled;  
 nor yet  
 Did those twin brothers, risen again  
 and whole;  
 Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she  
 sat.  
 Then came a change; for sometimes I  
 would catch  
 Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it  
 hard,  
 And fling it like a viper off, and shriek,  
 'You are not Ida;' clasp it once again,  
 And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,  
 And call her sweet, as if in irony, 82  
 And call her hard and cold, which  
 seem'd a truth;  
 And still she fear'd that I should lose  
 my mind,  
 And often she believed that I should  
 die;  
 Till out of long frustration of her  
 care,  
 And pensive tendance in the all-weary  
 noons,  
 And watches in the dead, the dark,  
 when clocks  
 Throb'd thunder thro' the palace  
 floors, or call'd  
 On flying Time from all their silver  
 tongues—  
 And out of memories of her kindlier 90  
 days,

And sidelong glances at my father's  
 grief,  
 And at the happy lovers heart in  
 heart—  
 And out of hauntings of my spoken  
 love,  
 And lonely listenings to my mutter'd  
 dream,  
 And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
 And wordless broodings on the wasted  
 cheek—  
 From all a closer interest flourish'd up,  
 Tenderness touch by touch, and last,  
 to these,  
 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung  
 with tears  
 By some cold morning glacier; frail at  
 first  
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
 But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close  
 to death  
 For weakness. It was evening; silent  
 light  
 Slept on the painted walls, wherein  
 were wrought  
 Two grand designs; for on one side  
 arose  
 The women up in wild revolt, and  
 storm'd  
 At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes,  
 they cramm'd  
 The forum, and half-crush'd among  
 the rest  
 A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the 110  
 other side  
 Hortensia spoke against the tax; be-  
 hind,  
 A train of dames. By axe and eagle  
 sat,  
 With all their foreheads drawn in  
 Roman scowls,  
 And half the wolf's-milk curdled in  
 their veins,  
 The fierce triumvirs; and before them  
 paused  
 Hortensia, pleading; angry was her  
 face.

I saw the forms; I knew not where  
 I was.  
 They did but look like hollow shows;  
 nor more  
 Sweet Ida. Palm to palm she sat;  
 the dew  
 120

Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her  
 shape  
 And rounder seem'd. I moved, I  
 sigh'd; a touch  
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon  
 my hand.  
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran  
 Mine down my face, and with what  
 life I had,  
 And like a flower that cannot all un-  
 fold,  
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the  
 sun,  
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on  
 her  
 Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whis-  
 peringly:

'If you be what I think you, some  
 sweet dream,

130

I would but ask you to fulfil yourself;  
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
 I ask you nothing; only, if a dream,  
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die  
 to-night.  
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I  
 die.'

I could no more, but lay like one in  
 trance,  
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his  
 friends,  
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor make  
 one sign,  
 But lies and dreads his doom. She  
 turn'd, she paused,  
 She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt  
 a cry,  
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of  
 death,

140



'“I shall die to-night.  
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die”'

And I believed that in the living world  
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;  
Till back I fell, and from mine arms  
she rose

Glowing all over noble shame; and all  
Her falser self slipt from her like a  
robe,

And left her woman, lovelier in her  
mood

Than in her mould that other, when  
she came

From barren deeps to conquer all with  
love,

And down the streaming crystal dropt;  
and she <sup>150</sup>

Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
Naked, a double light in air and  
wave,

To meet her Graces, where they deck'd  
her out

For worship without end — nor end of  
mine,

Stateliest, for thee! but mute she  
glided forth,

Nor glanced behind her, and I sank  
and slept,

Fill'd thro' and thro' with love, a  
happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near  
me, held

A volume of the poets of her land.  
There to herself, all in low tones, she  
read: <sup>160</sup>

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the  
white;

Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;  
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry  
font.

The fire-fly wakens; waken thou with me.

'Now droops the milk-white peacock like  
a ghost,

And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

'Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the  
stars,

And all thy heart lies open unto me.

'Now slides the silent meteor on, and  
leaves

A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in  
me. <sup>170</sup>

'Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake.  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
into my bosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page; she found  
a small  
Sweet idyl, and once more, as low, she  
read:

'Come down, O maid, from yonder  
mountain height.

What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd  
sang),

In height and cold, the splendor of the  
hills?

But cease to move so near the heavens, and  
cease <sup>180</sup>

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;

And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down

And find him; by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,

Or red with spirted purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk

With Death and Morning on the Silver  
Horns,

Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
Nor find him dropt upon the firs of ice, <sup>190</sup>

That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors.

But follow; let the torrent dance thee  
down

To find him in the valley; let the wild  
Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave

The monstrous ledges there to slope, and  
spill

Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-  
smoke,

That like a broken purpose waste in air.

So waste not thou, but come; for all the  
vales <sup>200</sup>

Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth  
Arise to thee; the children call, and I

Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every  
sound,

Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is  
sweet;

Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned, while with shut  
eyes I lay

Listening, then look'd. Pale was the  
perfect face;

The bosom with long sighs labor'd;  
and meek <sup>210</sup>

Seem'd the full lips, and mild the  
luminous eyes,

And the voice trembled and the hand.  
She said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had  
fail'd

In sweet humility, had fail'd in all;  
That all her labor was but as a block

Left in the quarry ; but she still were  
 loth,  
 She still were loth to yield herself to  
 one  
 That wholly scorn'd to help their equal  
 rights  
 Against the sons of men and barbarous  
 laws.  
 She pray'd me not to judge their cause  
 from her <sup>220</sup>  
 That wrong'd it, sought far less for  
 truth than power  
 In knowledge. Something wild with-  
 in her breast,  
 A greater than all knowledge, beat her  
 down.  
 And she had nursed me there from  
 week to week ;  
 Much had she learnt in little time. In  
 part  
 It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
 To vex true hearts ; yet was she but a  
 girl—  
 'Ah fool, and made myself a queen of  
 farce !  
 When comes another such ? never, I  
 think,  
 Till the sun drop, dead, from the signs.'  
 Her voice  
 Choked, and her forehead sank upon  
 her hands, <sup>231</sup>  
 And her great heart thro' all the fault-  
 ful past  
 Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not  
 break ;  
 Till notice of a change in the dark  
 world  
 Was lispt about the acacias, and a  
 bird,  
 That early woke to feed her little ones,  
 Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light.  
 She moved, and at her feet the volume  
 fell.

'Blame not thyself too much,' I  
 said, 'nor blame  
 Too much the sons of men and bar-  
 barous laws ; <sup>240</sup>  
 These were the rough ways of the  
 world till now.  
 Henceforth thou hast a helper, me,  
 that know  
 The woman's cause is man's ; they  
 rise or sink  
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or  
 free.

For she that out of Lethe scales with  
 man  
 The shining steps of Nature, shares  
 with man  
 His nights, his days, moves with him  
 to one goal,  
 Stays all the fair young planet in her  
 hands—  
 If she be small, slight-natured, miser-  
 able,  
 How shall men grow ? but work no  
 more alone ! <sup>250</sup>  
 Our place is much ; as far as in us lies  
 We two will serve them both in aid-  
 ing her—  
 Will clear away the parasitic forms  
 That seem to keep her up but drag  
 her down—  
 Will leave her space to burgeon out  
 of all  
 Within her—let her make herself her  
 own  
 To give or keep, to live and learn and  
 be  
 All that not harms distinctive woman-  
 hood.  
 For woman is not undeveloped man,  
 But diverse. Could we make her as  
 the man, <sup>260</sup>  
 Sweet Love were slain ; his dearest  
 bond is this,  
 Not like to like, but like in difference.  
 Yet in the long years liker must they  
 grow ;  
 The man be more of woman, she of  
 man ;  
 He gain in sweetness and in moral  
 height,  
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that  
 throw the world ;  
 She mental breadth, nor fail in child-  
 ward care,  
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger  
 mind ;  
 Till at the last she set herself to man,  
 Like perfect music unto noble words ;  
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of  
 Time, <sup>271</sup>  
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all  
 their powers,  
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the to-be,  
 Self-reverent each and reverencing  
 each,  
 Distinct in individualities,  
 But like each other even as those who  
 love.

Then comes the statelier Eden back to to  
men;

Then reign the world's great bridals,  
chaste and calm;

Then springs the crowning race of  
humankind. 279

May these things be!

Sighing she spoke: 'I fear  
They will not.'

'Dear, but let us type them now  
In our own lives, and this proud  
watchword rest

Of equal; seeing either sex alone  
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
Nor equal, nor unequal. Each fulfils  
Defect in each, and always thought  
in thought,

Purpose in purpose, will in will, they  
grow,

The single pure and perfect animal,  
The two-cell'd heart beating, with  
one full stroke,

Life.'

And again sighing she spoke: 'A  
dream 290

That once was mine! what woman  
taught you this?'

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than  
I know,

Immersed in rich foreshadowings of  
the world,

I loved the woman. He, that doth  
not, lives

A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
Or pines in sad experience worse than  
death,

Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt  
with crime.

Yet was there one thro' whom I love'd  
her, one

Not learned, save in gracious house-  
hold ways,

Not perfect, nay, but full of tender  
wants, 300

No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
Interpreter between the gods and men,  
Who look'd all native to her place,  
and yet

On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a  
sphere

'Too gross to tread, and all male minds  
perforce

Sway'd to her from their orbits as  
they moved,

And girdled her with music. Happy  
he

With such a mother! faith in woman-  
kind

Beats with his blood, and trust in all  
things high 310

Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip  
and fall

He shall not blind his soul with clay.'  
'But I,'

Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike —  
It seems you love to cheat yourself

with words;  
This mother is your model. I have  
heard

Of your strange doubts; they well  
might be; I seem

A mockery to my own self: Never,  
Prince!

You cannot love me.'

'Nay, but thee,' I said,  
'From yearlong poring on thy pic-  
tured eyes,

Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen,  
and saw 320

Thee woman thro' the crust of iron  
moods

That mask'd thee from men's rever-  
ence up, and forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boy-  
hood; now,

Given back to life, to life indeed, thro'  
thee,

Indeed I love. The new day comes,  
the light

Dearer for night, as dearer thou for  
faults

Lived over. Lift thine eyes; my  
doubts are dead,

My haunting sense of hollow shows;  
the change,

This truthful change in thee has kill'd  
it. Dear,

Look up, and let thy nature strike on  
mine, 330

Like yonder morning on the blind  
half-world.

Approach and fear not; breathe upon  
my brows;

In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
Melts mist-like into this bright hour,  
and this

Is morn to more, and all the rich to-  
come

Reels, as the golden Autumn wood-  
land reels



“A dream  
That once was mine! what woman taught you this?”

Athwart the smoke of burning weeds.  
 Forgive me,  
 I waste my heart in signs; let be.  
 My bride,  
 My wife, my life! O, we will walk  
 this world,  
 Yoked in all exercise of noble end, 340  
 And so thro' those dark gates across  
 the wild  
 That no man knows. Indeed I love  
 thee; come,  
 Yield thyself up; my hopes and thine  
 are one.  
 Accomplish thou my manhood and  
 thyself;  
 Lay thy sweet hands in mine and  
 trust to me.'

#### CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give  
 you all

The random scheme as wildly as it  
 rose.  
 The words are mostly mine; for when  
 we ceased  
 There came a minute's pause, and  
 Walter said,  
 'I wish she had not yielded!' then to  
 me,  
 'What if you drest it up poetical-  
 ly!'  
 So pray'd the men, the women; I  
 gave assent.  
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme  
 of seven  
 Together in one sheaf? What style  
 could suit?  
 The men required that I should give  
 throughout  
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,  
 With which we banter'd little Lillia  
 first;  
 The women — and perhaps they felt  
 their power,

For something in the ballads which  
 they sang,  
 Or in their silent influence as they  
 sat,  
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with bur-  
 lesque,  
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn  
 close —  
 They hated banter, wish'd for some-  
 thing real,  
 A gallant fight, a noble princess — why  
 Not make her true-heroic — true-sub-  
 lime ?  
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the  
 close ?  
 Which yet with such a framework  
 scarce could be.  
 Then rose a little feud betwixt the  
 two,  
 Betwixt the mockers and the realists ;  
 And I, betwixt them both, to please  
 them both,  
 And yet to give the story as it rose,  
 I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
 And maybe neither pleased myself nor  
 them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no  
 part  
 In our dispute ; the sequel of the  
 tale  
 Had touch'd her, and she sat, she  
 pluck'd the grass.  
 She flung it from her, thinking ; last,  
 she fixt  
 A showery glance upon her aunt, and  
 said,  
 'You — tell us what we are' — who  
 might have told,  
 For she was cramm'd with theories  
 out of books,  
 But that there rose a shout. The gates  
 were closed  
 At sunset, and the crowd were swarm-  
 ing now,  
 To take their leave, about the garden  
 rails.

So I and some went out to these ;  
 we climb'd  
 The slope to Vivian-place, and turning  
 saw  
 The happy valleys, half in light, and  
 half  
 Far-shadowing from the west, a land  
 of peace ;

Gray halls alone among their massive  
 groves ;  
 Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic  
 tower  
 Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths  
 of wheat ;  
 The shimmering glimpses of a stream ;  
 the seas ;  
 A red sail, or a white ; and far be-  
 yond,  
 Imagined more than seen, the skirts  
 of France.

'Look there, a garden !' said my  
 college friend,  
 The Tory member's elder son, 'and  
 there !  
 God bless the narrow sea which keeps  
 her off,  
 And keeps our Britain, whole within  
 herself,  
 A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —  
 Some sense of duty, something of a  
 faith,  
 Some reverence for the laws ourselves  
 have made,  
 Some patient force to change them  
 when we will,  
 Some civic manhood firm against the  
 crowd —  
 But yonder, whiff ! there comes a sud-  
 den heat,  
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his  
 head,  
 The king is scared, the soldier will not  
 fight,  
 The little boys begin to shoot and  
 stab,  
 A kingdom topples over with a shriek  
 Like an old woman, and down rolls  
 the world  
 In mock heroics stranger than our  
 own ;  
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring  
 out ;  
 Too comic for the solemn things they  
 are,  
 Too solemn for the comic touches in  
 them,  
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a  
 dream  
 As some of theirs — God bless the nar-  
 row seas !  
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic  
 broad.'

'Have patience,' I replied, 'ourselves are full  
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams  
Are but the needful preludes of the truth.  
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,  
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,  
This fine old world of ours is but a child  
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time  
To learn its limbs; there is a hand that guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails, 80

And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,  
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,  
Among six boys, head under head, and look'd  
No little lily-handed baronet he,  
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,  
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,  
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
A patron of some thirty charities,  
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,  
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;  
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;  
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those



“You — tell us what we want” —

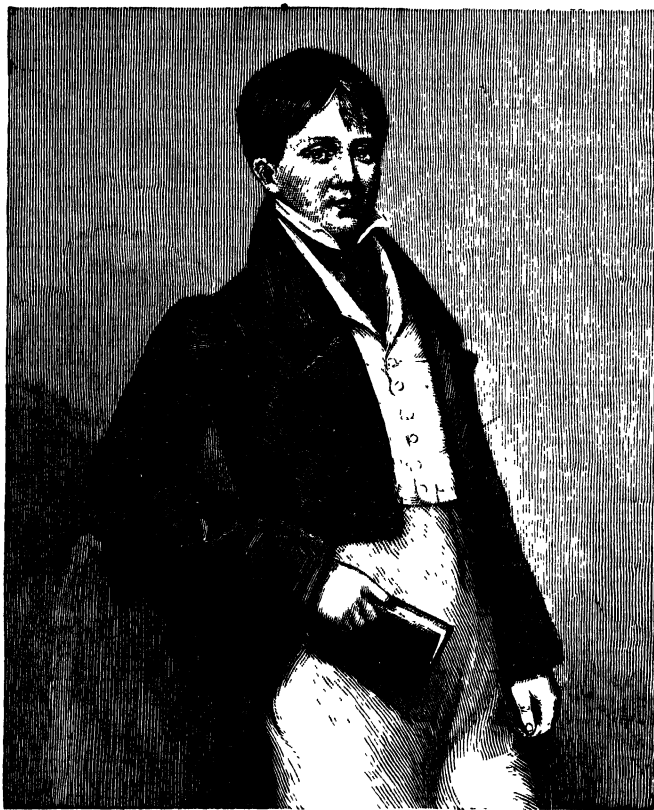


That stood the nearest — now address'd  
 to speech —  
 Who spoke few words and pithy, such  
 as closed  
 Welcome, farewell, and welcome for  
 the year  
 To follow. A shout rose again, and  
 made  
 The long line of the approaching rook-  
 ery swerve  
 From the elms, and shook the branches  
 of the deer  
 From slope to slope thro' distant ferns,  
 and rang  
 Beyond the bourn of sunset — O, a  
 shout <sup>100</sup>  
 More joyful than the city-roar that  
 hails  
 Premier or king! Why should not  
 these great sirs  
 Give up their parks some dozen times  
 a year  
 To let the people breathe? So thrice  
 they cried,  
 I likewise, and in groups they stream'd  
 away.

But we went back to the Abbey,  
 and sat on,  
 So much the gathering darkness  
 charm'd; we sat  
 But spoke not, rapt in nameless rev-  
 erie,  
 Perchance upon the future man. The  
 walls  
 Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and  
 owls whoop'd, <sup>110</sup>  
 And gradually the powers of the  
 night,  
 That range above the region of the  
 wind,  
 Deepening the courts of twilight broke  
 them up  
 Thro' all the silent spaces of the  
 worlds,  
 Beyond all thought into the heaven  
 of heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
 Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir  
 Ralph  
 From those rich silks, and home well-  
 pleased we went.





ARTHUR HENRY HALLAM

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy  
face,  
 By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
 Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;  
 Thou madest Life in man and brute ;  
 Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot  
 Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
 Thou madest man, he knows not  
 why,  
 He thinks he was not made to die ;  
 And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
 The highest, holiest manhood, thou.  
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;  
 Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;  
 They have their day and cease to  
 be;  
 They are but broken lights of thee,  
 And thou, O Lord, art more than  
 they.

We have but faith: we cannot know,  
 For knowledge is of things we see;  
 And yet we trust it comes from  
 thee,

A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to  
 more,

But more of reverence in us dwell;  
 That mind and soul, according well,  
 May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;  
 We mock thee when we do not fear:  
 But help thy foolish ones to bear;  
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me,  
 What seem'd my worth since I  
 began;  
 For merit lives from man to man,  
 And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
 I trust he lives in thee, and there  
 I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering  
 cries,  
 Confusions of a wasted youth;  
 Forgive them where they fail in  
 truth,  
 And in thy wisdom make me wise.  
 1849.

I held it truth, with him who sings  
 To one clear harp in divers tones,  
 That men may rise on stepping  
 stones

Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
 And find in loss a gain to match?  
 Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
 The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be  
 drown'd,

Let darkness keep her raven gloss.  
 Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
 To dance with Death, to beat the  
 ground,

Than that the victor Hours should  
 scorn

The long result of love, and boast,  
 'Behold the man that loved and lost  
 But all he was is overworn.'

## II

Old yew, which graspest at the stones  
 That name the underlying dead,  
 Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
 Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
 And bring the firstling to the flock;  
 And in the dusk of thee the clock  
 Beats out the little lives of men.

O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
 Who changest not in any gale,  
 Nor branding summer suns avail  
 To touch thy thousand years of gloom;

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
 Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
 I seem to fall from out my blood  
 And grow incorporate into thee.

## III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,  
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
 What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly  
 run;

A web is woven across the sky;  
 From out waste places comes a cry,  
 And murmurs from the dying sun;

And all the phantom, Nature,  
 stands—

With all the music in her tone,  
 A hollow echo of my own, —  
 A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
 Embrace her as my natural good;  
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
 Upon the threshold of the mind?

## IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;  
My will is bondsman to the dark;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou shouldst fall from thy  
desire,  
Who scarcely dardest to inquire,  
'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early  
years.

Break, thou deep vase of chilling  
tears,  
That grief hath snaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd eyes;  
With morning wakes the will, and  
cries,  
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel;  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap meo'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the  
cold;  
But that large grief which these en-  
fold  
Is given in outline and no more.

## VI

One writes, that 'other friends remain.'  
That 'loss is common to the race' —  
And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more.  
Too common! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
Who pledgest now thy gallant son,

A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor, — while thy head is  
bow'd,  
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
At that last hour to please him well;  
Who mused on all I had to tell,  
And something written, something  
thought;

Expecting still his advent home;  
And ever met him on his way  
With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'  
Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O, somewhere, meek, unconscious  
dove,  
That sittest ranging golden hair;  
And glad to find thyself so fair,  
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest:  
And thinking 'this will please him  
best,'  
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;  
And with the thought her color  
burns;  
And, having left the glass, she turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future lord  
Was drown'd in passing thro' the  
ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O, what to her shall be the end?  
And what to me remains of good?  
To her perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me no second friend.

## VII

Dark house, by which once more I  
stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to  
beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

## IN MEMORIAM

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghastly thro' the drizzling  
rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank  
day.

### VIII

A happy lover who has come  
To look on her that loves him well,  
Who 'lights and rings the gateway  
bell,  
And learns her gone and far from  
home;

He saddens, all the magic light  
Dies off at once from bower and  
hall,  
And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot  
In which we two were wont to  
meet,  
The field, the chamber, and the  
street,  
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
In those deserted walks, may find  
A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
O my forsaken heart, with thee  
And this poor flower of poesy  
Which, little cared for, fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
I go to plant it on his tomb,  
That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or, dying, there at least may die.

### IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
Sail'st the placid ocean plains—  
With my lost Arthur's loved re-  
mains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him  
o'er.

So draw him home to those that  
mourn

In vain ; a favorable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,  
bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the  
prow ;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps  
now,  
My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run ;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me. ]

### X

I hear the noise about thy keel ;  
I hear the bell struck in the night ;  
I see the cabin-window bright ;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign  
lands ;  
And letters unto trembling hands ;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd  
life.

So bring him ; we have idle dreams ;  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home-bred fancies. O, to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the  
rains,  
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The change of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in  
brine,  
And hands so often clasp'd in  
mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with  
shells.



'Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
Sallest the placid ocean-plains'

## XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground ;

Calm and deep peace on this high  
wold,  
And on these dews that drench the  
furze,

And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold ;

Calm and still light on yon great  
plain

That sweeps with all its autumn  
blossoms,

And crowded farms and lessening  
towers,

To mingle with the bounding main ;

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall,

And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair ;

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in  
rest,

And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving  
deep.

## XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To bear thro' heaven a tale of  
woe,

Some dolorous message knit be-  
low  
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go, I cannot stay ;  
I leave this mortal ark behind,  
A weight of nerves without a  
mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern  
skies,

And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the

And saying, 'Comes he thus, my  
friend ?

Is this the end of all my care ?  
And circle moaning in the air,  
Is this the end ? Is this the end ?

And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn  
That I have been an hour away.

## XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees  
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
And moves his doubtful arms, and  
feels

Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
A void where heart on heart re-  
posed ;

And, where warm hands have prest  
and closed,  
Silence, till I be silent too ;

Which weep the comrade of my  
choice,

An awful thought, a life removed,  
The human-hearted man I loved,  
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me, many  
years,

I do not suffer in a dream ;  
For now so strange do these things  
seem,

Mine eyes have leisure for their  
tears,

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
And glance about the approaching  
sails,

As tho' they brought but merchants'  
bales,

And not the burthen that they bring.

## XIV

If one should bring me this report,  
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-  
day,

And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
Should see thy passengers in rank  
Come stepping lightly down the  
plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine,  
Should strike a sudden hand in  
mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
And how my life had droop'd of  
late,

And he should sorrow o'er my state  
And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
No hint of death in all his frame,  
But found him all in all the same,  
I should not feel it to be strange.

## XV

To-night the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day,  
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies ;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea,  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world ;

And but for fancies, which aver  
That all thy motions gently pass  
Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;  
And but for fear it is not so,  
The wild unrest that lives in woe  
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
And onward drags a laboring breast,  
And topples round the dreary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## XVI

What words are these have fallen  
from me ?

Can calm despair and wild unrest

Be tenants of a single breast,  
Or Sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take  
The touch of change in calm or storm,

But knows no more of transient form  
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?  
Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
And staggers blindly ere she sink ?  
And stunn'd me from my power to think  
And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man  
Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
And flashes into false and true,  
And mingles all without a plan ?

*skipped*  
XVII

Thou comest, much wept for ; such a breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week ; the days go by ;  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst  
roam, *future voyage*  
My blessing like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark,  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars ;  
*the benign influence of stars*  
So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee,  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run. *B*

XVIII

'T is well ; 't is something ; we may stand

Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

'T is little ; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, even yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

*Werner* XIX  
The Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no more ;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,

I brim with sorrow drowning song,  
The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;  
My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,  
That breathe a thousand tender  
vows,  
Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead ;



Who speak their feeling <sup>not deep hence</sup> as it is,  
And weep the fulness from the mind.  
'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find  
Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort win;  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of death,  
And scarce endure to draw the  
breath.

Or like to noiseless phantoms flit ;

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
 To see the vacant chair, and think,  
 'How good! how kind! and he is  
 gone.'

## XXI

I sing to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me  
wave.

I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whercon to  
blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he  
speak :

'This fellow would make weakness  
weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers : ' Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain,  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people  
throng

The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

When Science reaches forth her arms  
To feel from world to world, and  
charms

'Her secret from the latest moon?'

**Behold, ye speak an idle thing;**  
**Ye never knew the sacred dust.**

I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing ;

And one is glad ; her note is gay,  
For now her little ones have ranged ;  
And one is sad ; her note is changed,  
Because her brood is stolen away.

Can be done <sup>4</sup> XXII

The path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracts that pleased us  
well.

Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to  
snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
And, crown'd with all the season  
lent. --

From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May.

But where the path we walk'd began  
To slant the fifth autumnal slope;  
As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
And spread his mantle dark and  
cold.

And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
And think that somewhere in the  
waste

The Shadow sits and waits for me.

## XVIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
Or breaking into song by fits,  
Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot.

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
I wander, often falling lame,  
And looking back to whence I came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads;  
*Life is a path of tears*  
And crying, How changed from where  
it ran

Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb.

But all the lavish hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan.

*undivided*  
When each by turns was guide to each,  
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
And Thought leapt out to wed with  
Thought  
Ere Thought could wed itself with  
Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,  
And all was good that Time could  
bring, *delight*  
And all the secret of the Spring  
Moved in the chambers of the blood;  
And many an old philosophy *passed*  
On Argive heights divinely sang,  
And round us all the thicket rang  
To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV

And was the day of my delight  
As pure and perfect as I say?  
The very source and fount of day  
Is dash'd with wandering isles of  
night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
This earth had been the Paradise  
It never look'd to human eyes  
Since our first sun arose and set.

*have a right to*  
And is it that the haze of grief  
Makes former gladness loom so  
great?

The lowness of the present state,  
That sets the past in this relief? *confer*

Or that the past will always win  
A glory from its being far,  
And orb into the perfect star  
We saw not when we moved therein?

XXV

I know that this was Life,—the  
track  
Whereon with equal feet we fared;  
And then, as now, the day pre-  
pared  
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
As light as carrier-birds in air;  
I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of Love;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
When mighty Love would cleave in  
twain  
The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him.



16. 'They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave'

Still onward winds the dreary way;  
I with it, for I long to prove  
No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye, which watches guilt  
And goodness, and hath power to see

Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
And towers fallen as soon as built —

O, if indeed that eye foresee  
Or see — in Him is no before —  
In more of life true life no more  
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII

I envy not in any moods  
The captive void of noble rage,  
The linnet born within the cage,  
That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes  
His license in the field of time,  
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted troth  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;  
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of  
Christ.

The moon is hid, the night is still;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill

Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor

Swell out and fall, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound;

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again;

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

## XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve,

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight  
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,  
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new,  
Why should they miss their yearly due —

Before their time? They too will die.

## XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth;

A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gamboll'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech;

We heard them sweep the winter  
land;  
And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;  
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him  
Last year; impetuously we sang.

We ceased; a gentler feeling crept  
Upon us: surely rest is meet,  
'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is  
sweet,'  
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;  
Once more we sang: 'They do not  
die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they  
change;

Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
With gather'd power, yet the same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
Draw forth the cheerful day from  
night:  
O Father, touch the east, and  
light  
The light that shone when Hope was  
born.

XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
And home to Mary's house return'd,  
Was this demanded — if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four  
days?'  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful  
sound,  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;

He told it not, or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII  
Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there,  
Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so complete,  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's  
feet

With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful  
prayers,  
Whose loves in higher love endure;  
What souls possess themselves so  
pure,  
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm  
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer  
air,  
Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays  
Her early heaven, her happy views;  
Nor thou with shadow'd hint con-  
fuse

A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good.  
O, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And even for want of such a type.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me  
this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is;

*Universe*  
This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks  
In some wild poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?  
'T were hardly worth my while to  
choose  
Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die;

'T were best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent  
draws.  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust  
Should murmur from the narrow  
house,  
'The cheeks drop in, the body bows;  
Man dies, nor is there hope in dust;

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,  
But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
To keep so sweet a thing alive.'  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift or  
slow

Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
'The sound of that forgetful shore  
Will change my sweetness more and  
more,  
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put  
An idle case? If Death were seen  
At first as Death, Love had not  
been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,

More fellowship of sluggish moods,  
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
Had bruised the herb and crush'd  
the grape,  
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

## XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,

We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current  
coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
Where truth in closest words shall  
fail,

When truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and  
wrought

With human hands the creed of  
creeds

In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the  
sheaf,

Or builds the house, or digs the  
grave,

And those wild eyes that watch the  
wave

In roarings round the coral reef.

## XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:  
'Thou pratest here where thou art  
least;

This faith has many a purer priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,  
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek:  
'I am not worthy even to speak  
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,  
And all he said of things divine,  
And dear to me as sacred wine  
To dying lips is all he said,

'I murmur'd, as I came along,  
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd,  
And loiter'd in the master's field,  
And darken'd sanctities with song.'



'Streams that swift or slow  
Draw down Æonian hills'

## XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,  
Tho' always under alter'd skies  
The purple from the distance dies,  
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
The herald melodies of spring,  
But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
Survive in spirits render'd free,  
Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## Yen ke XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,  
And answering now my random  
stroke of hollow dust  
With fruitful cloud and living  
smoke,  
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless  
head,  
To thee too comes the golden hour  
When flower is feeling after flower;  
But Sorrow, — next upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of  
men, —  
What whisper'd from her lying  
lips?

Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,  
And passes into gloom again.

## XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour  
And look on Spirits breathed away,  
As on a maiden in the day  
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth  
rise  
To take her latest leave of home,  
And hopes and light regrets that  
come  
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
And tears are on the mother's face,  
As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
Becoming as is meet and fit  
A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
A life that bears immortal fruit  
In those great offices that suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!  
How often shall her old fireside  
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have  
told,  
And bring her babe, and make her  
boast,  
Till even those that miss'd her most  
Shall count new things as dear as  
old;

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
Till growing winters lay me low;  
My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
Did ever rise from high to higher,  
As mounts the heavenward altar-  
fire,  
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something  
strange,  
And I have lost the links that bound  
Thy changes; here upon the ground,  
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be —  
That I could wing my will with  
might  
To leap the grades of life and light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee!

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
To that vague fear implied in death,  
Nor shudders at the grunts beneath  
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the  
moor:  
An inner trouble I behold,  
A spectral doubt which makes me  
cold,  
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind  
The wonders that have come to thee,

Thro' all the secular to-be,  
But evermore a life behind.

## XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim.  
He still outstrip me in the race;  
It was but unity of place  
That made me dream I rank'd with  
him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
And he the much-beloved again,  
A lord of large experience, train  
To ripen growth the mind and will;

And what delights can equal those  
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
When one that loves, but knows  
not, reads  
A truth from one that loves and  
knows?

## XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
And every spirit's folded bloom  
Thro' all its interval gloom  
In some long trance should slumber  
on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
Bare of the body, might it last  
And silent traces of the past  
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man,  
So that still garden of the souls  
In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began:

And love will last as pure and whole  
As when he loved me here in Time,  
And at the spiritual prime  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

How fares it with the happy dead?  
For here the man is more and more  
But he forgets the days before  
God shut the doorways of his

The days have vanish'd, five, ten, twenty,  
And yet perhaps the hoarse carce had  
Gives out at times — he  
whence — may live?  
A little flash, a mystic hint

Or, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth,  
Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good, define it well;  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark, and  
be

Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

Yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile com-  
plete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last — far off — at last, to all;  
And every winter change to spring

So runs my dream; but what am I?  
An infant crying in the night;  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fall beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likeliest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere  
Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,  
I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares

Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and  
grope,  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

So careful of the type? but no.  
From scarped cliff and quarried stone  
She cries, 'A thousand types are  
gone;  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

Thou makest thine appeal to me;  
I bring to life, I bring to death;  
The spirit does but mean the breath:  
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
Who built him funes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law —  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his  
creed

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song.  
Peace; come away: we do him  
wrong  
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;  
But half my life I leave behind.



Methinks my friend is richly  
shrined;  
But I shall pass, my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead;  
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,  
'Adieu, adieu,' for evermore.

## LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell.  
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
Of hearts that beat from day to  
day,  
Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
And those cold crypts where they shall  
cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore  
grieve  
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?  
Abide a little longer here,  
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

## LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me  
No casual mistress, but a wife,  
My bosom-friend and half of life;  
As I confess it needs must be?

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
And put thy harsher moods aside,  
If thou wilt have me wise and good?

My centred passion cannot move,  
Nor will it lessen from to-day;  
But I'll have leave at times to  
play  
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
With so much hope for years to  
come,  
That, howsoever I know thee, some  
Could hardly tell what name were  
thine.

## LX

He past, a soul of nobler tone;  
My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
Like some poor girl whose heart is  
set  
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
She finds the baseness of her lot,  
Half jealous of she knows not what,  
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;  
She sighs amid her narrow days,  
Moving about the household ways,  
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,  
And tease her till the day draws by;  
At night she weeps, 'How vain am I!  
How should he love a thing so low?'

## LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,  
Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
With all the circle of the wise,  
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
How dimly character'd and slight,  
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and  
night,  
How blanch'd with darkness must I  
grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
Where thy first form was made a  
man;  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakespeare love thee  
more.

## LXII

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast  
Could make thee somewhat blench  
or fail,  
Then be my love an idle tale  
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
When he was little more than boy,  
On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind,

And breathes a novel world, the while  
His other passion wholly dies.

Or in the light of deeper eyes  
Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
And love in which my hound has  
part,  
Can hang no weight upon my heart  
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,  
As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy,  
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I  
weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath  
been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy  
chance,  
And breathes the blows of circum-  
stance,  
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning  
slope

The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are  
still,

A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labor of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands:  
'Does my old friend remember me?'

## LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With 'Love's too precious to be lost  
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,  
'Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing;

'Since we deserved the name of friends  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee  
And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand.

He plays with threads, he beats his  
chair  
'For pastime, dreaming of the sky;  
His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west  
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away,  
From off my bed the moonlight dies;

And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray ;

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the dark church like a ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers in the dawn.

## LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times  
my breath ;  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows  
not Death,  
Nor can I dream of thee as dead.

<sup>As</sup> I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
When all our path was fresh with  
dew ;  
And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillée to the breaking morn'.

But what is this ? I turn about,  
I find a trouble in thine eye,  
Which makes me sad I know not  
why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt ;

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
I wake, and I discern the truth ;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no  
more,  
That Nature's ancient power was  
lost ;  
The streets were black with smoke  
and frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door ;

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny boughs ;  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown ;

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary  
hairs :

They call'd me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They call'd me fool, they call'd me  
child :

I found an angel of the night ;

The voice was low, the look was  
bright ;  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled.

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
That seem'd to touch it into leaf ;  
The voice was not the voice of  
grief,  
The words were hard to understand.

## LXX

I cannot see the features right,  
When on the gloom I strive to  
paint

The face I know ; the hues are faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons  
wrought,

A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
A hard that points, and palled shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning  
floors,

And shoals of pucker'd faces drive ;  
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores ;

Till all at once beyond the will  
I hear a wizard music roll,  
And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

## LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and  
trance

And madness, thou hast forged at  
last

A night-long present of the past  
In which we went thro' summer  
France.

Hadst thou such credit with the  
soul ?

Then bring an opiate treble strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of  
wrong, <sup>having brought his face</sup> ~~perform sense of loss~~  
That so my pleasure may be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of  
change,

The days that grow to something  
strange,

In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
The fortress, and the mountain  
ridge,  
The cataract flashing from the  
bridge,  
The breaker breaking on the beach.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
And howlest, issuing out of night,  
With blasts that blow the poplar  
white,  
And lash with storm the streaming  
pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
To pine in that reverse of doom,

Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
And blurr'd the splendor of the  
sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
With thy quick tears that make the  
rose  
Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who mightst have heaved a windless  
flame  
Up the deep East, or, whispering,  
play'd  
A chequer-work of beam and  
shade

Along the hills, yet look'd the same,



'I found a wood with thorny boughs'

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;  
Day, mark'd as with some hideous  
crime,

When the dark hand struck down  
thro' time, ~~mark'd as with some hideous~~  
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burthen'd  
brows

Thro' clouds that drench the morn-  
ing star,

And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous  
day;

Touch thy full goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the  
ground.

## LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,  
So little done, such things to be,  
How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert  
true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
The head hath miss'd an earthly  
wreath:

I curse not Nature, no, nor Death;  
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds.  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
And self-infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a  
name.

## LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
To those that watch it more and  
more,  
A likeness, hardly seen before,  
Comes out — to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
I see thee what thou art, and know  
Thy likeness to the wise below,  
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
And what I see I leave unsaid,  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has  
made

His darkness beautiful with thee.

## LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd  
In verse that brings myself relief  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd.

What practice howso'er expert  
In fitting aptest words to things,  
Or voice the richest-toned that  
sings,

Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days  
To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
And round thee with the breeze of  
song

To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
And, while we breathe beneath the  
sun,

The world which credits what is  
done

Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;  
But somewhere, out of human view,  
Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,  
And in a moment set thy face  
Where all the starry heavens of space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'  
The secular abyss to come,  
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
The darkness of our planet, last,  
Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
Ere half the lifetime of an oak

Ere these have clothed their branchy  
bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are  
vain;

And what are they when these remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

## LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that  
lie  
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
May bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;  
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that tells  
A grief, then changed to something  
else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways  
Shall ring with music all the same ;  
To breathe my loss is more than  
fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas  
hearth ;  
The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve.

The yule-clog sparkled keen with  
frost,  
No wing of wind the region swept,  
But over all things brooding slept  
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
Again our ancient games had place,  
The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
And dance and song and hoodman-  
blind.

Who show'd a token of distress ?  
No single tear, no mark of pain —  
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?  
O grief, can grief be changed to less ?

O last regret, regret can dial —  
No — mixt with all this mystic  
frame,  
Her deep relations are the same,  
But with long use her tears are dry.

## LXXIX

'More than my brothers are to me,' —  
Let this not vex thee, noble heart !  
I know thee of what force thou art,  
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,  
As moulded like in Nature's mint ;  
And hill and wood and field did print  
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
Thro' all his eddying coves, the same  
All winds that roam the twilight  
came

In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
But he was rich where I was poor,  
And he supplied my want the more  
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

## LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,  
That holy Death ere Arthur died  
Had moved me kindly from his side,  
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
The grief my loss in him had  
wrought,

A grief as deep as life or thought,  
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;  
I hear the sentence that he speaks ;  
He bears the burthen of the weeks,  
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;  
And, influence-rich to soothe and  
save,

Unused example from the grave  
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here,  
'My love shall now no further range ;  
There cannot come a mellow  
change,

For now is love mature in ear' ?

Love, then, had hope of richer store:  
 What end is here to my complaint?  
 This haunting whisper makes me faint,  
 'More years had made me love thee more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:  
 'My sudden frost was sudden gain  
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
 It might have drawn from after-heat.'

## LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death  
 For changes wrought on form and face;  
 No lower life that earth's embrace  
 May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
 From state to state the spirit walks;  
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks,  
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
 The use of virtue out of earth;  
 I know transplanted human worth  
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
 The wrath that garners in my heart:  
 He put our lives so far apart  
 We cannot hear each other speak.

## LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
 O sweet new-year delaying long;  
 Thou doest expectant Nature wrong;  
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
 Thy sweetness from its proper place?  
 Can trouble live with April days,  
 Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
 The little speedwell's darling blue,  
 Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
 Delayest the sorrow in my blood,

That longs to burst a frozen bud  
 And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone  
 The life that had been thine below,  
 And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
 To which thy crescent would have grown,

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
 A central warmth diffusing bliss  
 In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,  
 On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;  
 For now the day was drawing on,  
 When thou shouldst link thy life  
 with one  
 Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;  
 But that remorseless iron hour  
 Made cypress of her orange flower,  
 Despair of hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
 To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.

I see their unborn faces shine  
 Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,  
 Thy partner in the flowery walk  
 Of letters, genial table-talk,  
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills  
 The lips of men with honest praise,  
 And sun by sun the happy days  
 Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;  
 And all the train of bounteous hours

Conduct, by paths of growing powers,

To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
 Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
 Leaving great legacies of thought,  
 Thy spirit should fall from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,  
As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
And, hovering o'er the dolorous  
strait  
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
And He that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining  
hand,  
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?  
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore  
wake  
The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content!

LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and  
pall,

I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
Demanding, so to bring relief  
To this which is our common grief,  
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above  
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;  
And whether love for him have  
drain'd

My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
A faithful answer from the breast,  
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,  
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
Till on mine ear this message falls,  
That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
And show'd him in the fountain  
fresh  
All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
Whose life, whose thoughts were  
little worth,  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed  
of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
O heart, with kindest motion warm.  
O sacred essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,  
How much of act at human hands  
The sense of human will demands  
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
With gifts of grace, that might ex  
press  
All-comprehensive tenderness,  
All-sutilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved  
To works of weakness, but I find  
An image comforting the mind,  
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
For other friends that once I met;  
Nor can it suit me to forget  
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime  
To mourn for any overmuch;  
I, the divided half of such  
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
Eternal, separate from fears.  
The all-assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this;

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
And Spring that swells the narrow  
brooks,



And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
My old affection of the tomb,  
And my prime passion in the grave.

My old affection of the tomb,  
A part of stillness, yearns to speak :  
'Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore ;  
Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;  
But in dear words of human speech  
We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain  
The starry clearness of the free ?  
How is it ? Canst thou feel for me  
Some painless sympathy with pain ?'

And lightly does the whisper fall :  
'Tis hard for thee to fathom this ;  
I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead ;  
Or so methinks the dead would  
say ;  
Or so shall grief with symbols play  
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
That these things pass, and I shall  
prove

A meeting somewhere, love with  
love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
I could not, if I would, transfer  
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
The promise of the golden hours ?  
First love, first friendship, equal  
powers,  
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
That beats within a lonely place,  
That yet remembers his embrace,  
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not  
rest

Quite in the love of what is gone,  
But seeks to beat in time with  
one  
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
The primrose of the later year,  
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
That rollst from the gorgeous  
gloom

Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
'Thro' all the dewy tassell'd wood,  
And shadowing down the horned  
flood

In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
The full new life that feeds thy  
breath

Throughout my frame, till Doubt  
and Death,

Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
On leagues of odor streaming far,  
To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls

In which of old I wore the gown ;  
I roved at random thro' the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college  
fanes

The storm their high-built organs  
make,  
And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophet blazon'd on the panes ;

And caught once more the distant  
shout,

The measured pulse of racing oars  
Among the willows ; paced the  
shores

And many a bridge, and all about



'Thro' all the dewy tassell'd wood'

The same gray flats again, and felt  
The same, but not the same; and last  
Up that long walk of limes I past  
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door.  
I linger'd; all within was noise  
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
That crash'd the glass and beat the  
floor;

Where once we held debate, a band  
Of youthful friends, on mind and  
art,  
And labor, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
But send it slackly from the string;  
And one would pierce an outer  
ring,  
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,  
Would cleave the mark. A willing  
ear  
We lent him. Who but hung to  
hear

The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and  
grace

And music in the bounds of law,  
To those conclusions when we saw  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;  
And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo?

XXXXVIII  
Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,  
O, tell me where the senses mix,  
O, tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ

Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy ;

And I—my harp would prelude woe—  
I cannot all command the strings ;  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the  
floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and  
bright ;

And thou, with all thy breadth and  
height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town ;

He brought an eye for all he saw ;  
He mixt in all our simple sports ;  
They pleased him, fresh from brawling  
courts  
And dusty purlicus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the  
heat !

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning  
dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn !

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and  
flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon.

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,

And break the livelong summer  
day

With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to  
theme,

Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,  
He loved to rail against it still,  
For 'ground in yonder social mill  
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge,' he said, 'in form and  
gloss

The picturesque of man and man.'  
We talk'd: the stream beneath us  
ran,

The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,  
Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;

And last, returning from afar,  
Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fallen into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
We heard behind the woodbine veil  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

XC

He tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
Where nighest heaven, who first  
could sing.

This bitter seed among mankind:

That could the dead, whose dying  
eyes

Were closed with wail, resume their  
life.

They would but find in child and  
wife—

An iron welcome when they rise.

'T was well, indeed, when warm with  
wine,

To pledge them with a kindly tear,  
To talk them o'er, to wish them  
here, here & life

To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,  
Behold their brides in other hands :

The hard heir strides about their  
lands,  
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
Not less the yet-loved sire would  
make  
Confusion worse than death, and  
shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah, dear, but come thou back to me!  
Whatever change the years have  
wrought,  
I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee.

## XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush,  
Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;  
Come, wear the form by which I know  
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;  
The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing  
change  
May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
Upon the thousand waves of wheat  
That ripple round the lowly grange,  
Come; not in watches of the night,  
But where the sunbeam broodeth  
warm,  
Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
And like a finer light in light.

## XCII

If any vision should reveal  
Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
As but the canker of the brain;  
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal  
To chances where our lots were cast  
Together in the days behind,  
I might but say, I hear a wind  
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
A fact within the coming year;  
And tho' the months reviving near,  
Should prove the phantom-warning  
true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
But spiritual presentiments, <sup>7 my</sup>  
And such refraction of events  
As often rises ere they rise.

## XCIII form evident

I shall not see thee. Dare I say  
No spirit ever brake the band  
That stays him from the native land  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in  
clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
Where all the nerve of sense is numb,  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
With gods in unconjectured bliss,  
O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,  
Descend, and touch, and enter; hear  
The wish too strong for words to  
name, <sup>my spirit darkened</sup>  
That in this blindness of the frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought  
would hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.  
In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
The spirits from their golden day,  
Except, like them, thou too canst  
say,

My spirit is at peace with all.  
They haunt the silence of the breast,  
Imaginations calm and fair,  
The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience as a sea at rest;  
But when the heart is full of din,  
And doubt beside the portal waits,  
They can but listen at the gates,  
And hear the household jar within.

## XCV

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
For underfoot the herb was dry;  
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky  
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd;  
The brook alone far-off was heard,  
And on the board the fluttering urn.

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
That haunt the dusk, with ermine  
cap<sup>es</sup> <sup>noth</sup>  
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that  
peal'd  
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd  
at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the  
trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
Withdrew themselves from me and  
night,  
And in the house light after light  
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read  
Of that glad year which once had  
been,  
In those fallen leaves which kept  
their green,  
The noble letters of the dead.

And strangely on the silence broke  
The silent-speaking words, and  
strange  
Was love's dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell  
On doubts that drive the coward  
back,  
And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
The dead man touch'd me from the  
past,  
And all at once it seem'd at last  
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and  
whirl'd  
About empyreal heights of thought,  
And came on that which is, and  
caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

<sup>Harmony creating</sup>  
Æonian music measuring out  
The steps of Time—the shocks of  
Chance—  
The blows of Death. At length  
my trance  
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with  
doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to  
frame

In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
Or even for intellect to reach  
Thro' memory that which I became;

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
The knolls once more where, couch'd  
at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the  
trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field;

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
A breeze began to tremble o'er  
The large leaves of the sycamore,  
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshl<sup>ier</sup> overhead,  
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and  
swung <sup>many</sup> <sup>huddled</sup>  
The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said,

The dawn, the dawn, and died away;  
And East and West, without a  
breath, <sup>sun</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>even</sup>  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and  
death,  
To broaden into boundless day.

## XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-  
blue eyes  
Are tender over drowning flies,  
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

<sup>Hallel</sup>  
I know not: one indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touch'd a luring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true;

<sup>in harmony with</sup>  
Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest  
doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them; thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,  
And Power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;  
He finds on misty mountain-ground  
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;  
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life —  
I look'd on these and thought of thee  
In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,  
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
Their meetings made December June.

Their every parting was to die.  
Their love has never past away;  
The days she never can forget  
Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart;  
He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep.  
He seems to slight her simple heart,  
He thrills the labyrinth of the mind,  
He reads the secret of the star,  
He seems so near and yet so far,  
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
A wither'd violet is her bliss;

She knows not what his greatness is,  
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
Of early faith and plighted vows;  
She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
She darkly feels him great and wise  
She dwells on him with faithful eyes  
'I cannot understand; I love.'

XCVIII  
You leave us: you will see the Rhine,  
And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
When I was there with him; and go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
That city. All her splendor seems  
No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me;  
I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend  
Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings

Her shadow on the blaze of kings.  
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
With statelier progress to and fro  
The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,  
He told me, lives in any crowd,  
When all is gay with lamps and loud  
With sport and song, in booth and tent.

Imperial halls, or open plain;  
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks  
The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

## XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
So loud with voices of the birds,  
So thick with lowings of the herds,  
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy <sup>dim dawn</sup> darkling red  
On yon swollen brook that bubbles  
fast

By meadows breathing of the past,  
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
A song that slights the coming  
care,

And Autumn laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
To myriads on the genial earth,  
Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,  
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
To-day they count as kindred souls;  
They know me not, but mourn with  
me.

## C

I climb the hill: from end to end  
Of all the landscape underneath,  
I find no place that does not breathe  
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
Or low morass and whispering  
reed,

Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
That hears the latest linnnet trill,  
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill  
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;  
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
To left and right thro' meadowy  
curves,

That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kinder eye,  
And each reflects a kindlier day;  
And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

## CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall  
sway,  
The tender blossom flutter down,  
Unloved, that beech will gather  
brown,  
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,  
Ray round with flames her disk of  
seed,  
And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
The brook shall babble down the  
plain,  
At noon or when the Lesser Wain  
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
And flood the haunts of fern and  
craze,  
Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild  
A fresh association blow,  
And year by year the landscape  
grow

Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills  
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,  
And year by year our memory fades  
From all the circle of the hills.

## CII

We leave the well-beloved place  
Where first we gazed upon the sky;  
The roofs that heard our earliest cry  
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden-walks I move,  
Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood  
sung  
Long since its matin song, and heard  
The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassell'd hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here  
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours

With thy lost friend among the  
bowers,  
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,  
And each prefers his separate claim,  
Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go ; my feet are set  
To leave the pleasant fields and  
farms ;

They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

On that last night before we went *Before 3-7*  
From out the doors where I was *lost*  
bred,

I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
And maidens with me ; distant hills  
From hidden summits fed with rills  
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
They sang of what is wise and good  
And graceful. In the centre stood  
A statue veil'd, to which they sang,

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to  
me,

The shape of him I loved, and love  
For ever. Then flew in a dove  
And brought a summons from the sea ;

And when they learnt that I must go,  
They wept and wail'd, but led the  
way

To where a little shallop lay  
At anchor in the flood below ;



'You will see the Rhine,  
And those fair hills I sail'd below'



And on by many a level mead,  
And shadowing bluff that made the  
banks,

We glided winding under ranks  
Of iris and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore  
And roll'd the floods in grander  
space,

The maidens gather'd strength and  
grace

And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart  
And watch'd them, wax'd in every  
limb ;

I felt the thews of Anakin,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war.

And one would chant the history

Of that great race which is to be,  
And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
Began to foam, and we to draw  
From deep to deep, to where we saw  
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
But thrice as large as man he bent  
To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck ;

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
Bewail'd their lot ; I did them  
wrong :

'We served thee here,' they said,  
'so long,

And wilt thou leave us now behind ?'

So rapt I was, they could not win  
An answer from my lips, but he  
Replying, 'Enter likewise ye  
And go with us : ' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
A music out of sheet and shroud,  
We steer'd her toward a crimson  
cloud. *glory & heaven*  
That landlike slept along the deep.

*orv*  
The time draws near the birth of  
Christ ;

The moon is hid, the night is still ;

A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
That wakens at this hour of rest  
A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
In lands where not a memory strays,  
Nor landmark breathes of other  
days,

But all is new unhallow'd ground.

*CV*  
To-night ungather'd let us leave  
This laurel, let this holly stand :  
We live within the stranger's land.  
And strangely falls our Christmas-  
eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
And silent under other snows:  
There in due time the woodbine  
blows,  
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
The genial hour with mask and  
mime ;  
For change of place, like growth of  
time,  
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
By which our lives are chiefly  
proved,  
A little spare the night I loved,  
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;  
For who would keep an ancient  
form  
Thro' which the spirit breathes no  
more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;  
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be  
blown ;

No dance, no motion, save alone  
What lightens in the lucid East  
*new worlds of hope*  
Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
Long sleeps the summer in the  
seed :

Run out your measured arcs, and  
lead  
The closing cycle rich in good.

## CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful  
rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVII

It is the day when he was born,  
A bitter day that early sank  
Behind a purple-frosty bank  
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
To deck the banquet. Mercely flies  
The blast of North and East, and ice  
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
Above the wood which grides and  
clangs

Its leafless ribs and iron horns  
Together, in the drifting clouds drifts that pass  
To darken on the rolling brine  
That breaks the coast. But fetch  
the wine,

Arrange the board and brim the glass.

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
To make a solid core of heat;  
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
Of all things even as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
With books and music, surely we  
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,  
And vacant yearning, tho' with  
might

To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of death?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting  
hymns?

And on the depths of death there  
swims

The reflex of a human face,

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies:  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
From household fountains never  
dry;

The critic clearness of an eye  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of  
man;

Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace  
In such a sort, the child would twine  
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
Have look'd on: if they look'd in  
vain,

My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
The men of rathe and riper years;  
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
The proud was half disarm'd of  
pride,  
Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert  
by, ~~by, taking serious things~~  
The flippant put himself to school  
And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine;  
And loved thee more, that they  
were thine,

The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
But mine the love that will not tire,  
And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will.

~~id write in state~~  
The churl in spirit, up or down  
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,

To him who grasps a golden ball,  
By blood a king, at heart a clown, —

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons thro' the gilded pale;

For who can always act? but he,  
To whom a thousand memories call,  
Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd  
Each office of the social hour  
To noble manners, as the flower  
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
Drew in the expression of an eye  
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse  
The grand old name of gentleman,  
Defamed by every charlatan,  
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
That I, who gaze with temperate  
eyes  
On glorious insufficiencies,  
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
Of all my love, art reason why  
I seem to cast a careless eye  
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power  
Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
And hope could never hope too  
much,  
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
And tracts of calm from tempest  
made,  
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII

'T is held that sorrow makes us wise;  
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with  
thee

Which not alone had guided me,  
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—  
I doubt not what thou wouldst have  
been:

A life in civic action warm,  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should, licensed boldness gather force,  
Becoming, when the time has birth,  
A lever to uplift the earth  
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and  
go,  
With agonies, with energies,  
With overthrowings, and with cries,  
And undulations to and fro.

Who, loves not Knowledge? Who  
shall rail

Against her beauty? May she mix  
With men and prosper! Who shall fix  
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire;  
She sets her forward countenance,  
And leaps into the future chance,  
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—  
She cannot fight the fear of death.  
What is she, cut from love and faith,  
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst  
All barriers in her onward race  
For power. Let her know her place;  
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain, and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With Wisdom, like the younger child;

For she is earthly of the mind,  
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like  
thee,

Who grewest not alone in power  
And knowledge, but by year and  
hour

In reverence and in charity.

Now fades the last long streak of  
snow,

Now burgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and  
thick

By ashén roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and  
long,

The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And drown'd in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and  
lea,

The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
The happy birds, that change their  
sky

To build and brood, that live their  
lives

From land to land; and in my breast  
Spring wakens too, and my regret  
Becomes an April violet,  
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
That keener in sweet April wakes,  
And meets the year, and gives and  
takes

The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,  
The life re-orient out of dust,  
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine  
Upon me, while I muse alone,  
And that dear voice, I once have  
known,  
Still speak to me of me and mine.

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
For days of happy commune dead,  
Less yearning for the friendship fled  
Than some strong bond which is to be.

## CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this,  
To hold me from my proper place,  
A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss;

That out of distance might ensue  
Desire of nearness doubly sweet,  
And unto meeting, when we meet,  
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
And every span of shade that steals,  
And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.

## CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
The giant laboring in thy youth;  
Nor dream of human love and truth,  
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead  
Are breathers of an ampler day  
For ever nobler ends. They say  
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random forms,  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime  
to clime,

The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place,  
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;  
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and  
show

That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;

Move upward, working out the  
beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

Doors, where my heart was used to  
beat  
So quickly, not as one that weeps;  
I come once more; the city sleeps;  
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see  
Betwixt the black fronts long-with-  
drawn

A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are  
bland,  
And bright the friendship of thine  
eye;

And in my thoughts with scarce a  
sigh

I take the pressure of thine hand.

## CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:  
I think we are not wholly brain,  
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,  
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with  
Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:  
Let Science prove we are, and then  
What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
His action like the greater ape,  
But I was born to other things.

## CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun  
And ready, thou, to die with him,  
Thou watchest all things ever dim  
And dimmer, and a glory done.

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
The boat is drawn upon the shore;  
Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
By thee the world's great work is  
heard



in allegorically - the performance of actually working How  
in the next world 'There rolls the deep'

Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;  
Behind thee comes the greater light.

The market boat is on the stream,  
And voices hail it from the brink ;  
Thou hear'st the village hammer  
clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
For what is one, the first, the last,  
Thou, like my present and my  
past,  
Thy place is changed ; thou art the  
same.

## CXXII

O, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
While I rose up against my doom,  
And yearn'd to burst the folded  
gloom,  
To bare the eternal heavens again.

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul,  
In all her motion one with law?

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
Divide us not, be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flash of joy,  
I slip the thoughts of life and death :

And all the breeze of Fancy blows, *le*  
And every dewdrop paints a bow,  
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose.

## CX XIII

There rolls the deep where grew the  
tree.

O earth, what changes hast thou  
seen!

There where the long street roars  
hath been

The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing  
stands :

They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves  
and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it  
true;

For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

That which we dare invoke to bless;  
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest  
doubt;

He, They, One, All; within, with-  
out;

The Power in darkness whom we  
guess, —

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,  
Nor thro' the questions men may  
try,

The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,  
I heard a voice, 'believe no more,'  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would  
melt

The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd, 'I have felt'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:  
But that blind clamor made me wise;  
Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am befel'd again  
What is, and no man understands  
And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

Whatever I have said or sung,  
Some bitter notes my harp would  
give,

Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth,  
She did but look through dimmer  
eyes;

Or Love but play'd with gracious  
lies,

Because he felt so fix'd in truth;

And if the song were full of care,  
He breathed the spirit of the song;

And if the words were sweet and  
strong

He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail

To seek thee on the mystic deeps,

And this electric force, that keeps

A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

Love is and was my lord and king,

And in his presence I attend

To hear the tidings of my friend,

Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord,

And will be, tho' as yet I keep

Within the court on earth, and sleep

Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel

Who moves about from place to

place,

And whispers to the worlds of space,

In the deep night, that all is well.

And all is well, tho' faith and form

Be sunder'd in the night of fear;

Well roars the storm to those that

hear

A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,

And justice, even tho' thrice again

The red fool-fury of the Seine

Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,

And him, the lazar, in his rags

They tremble, the sustaining crags

The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;

The fortress crashes from on high,

The brute earth lightens to the sky

And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of hell;

While thou, dear spirit, happy star,

O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well. \*

CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade;  
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and  
Fear,  
If all your office had to do with  
With old results that look like new —

If this were all your mission here —  
To draw to sheathe a useless sword,  
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,  
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
To change the bearing of a word,  
To shift an arbitrary power,  
To cramp the student at his desk,  
To make old bareness picturesque  
And tuft with grass a feudal tower,

Why, then my scorn might well descend  
On you and yours. I see in part  
That all, as in some piece of art,  
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX  
Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,  
So far, so near in woe and weal,  
O loved the most, when most I feel  
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown, human, divine;  
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;  
Dear heavenly friend that canst not  
die,  
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;  
Strange friend, past, present, and to be;  
Loved deeper, darker understood;  
Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX  
Thy voice is on the rolling air;  
I hear thee where the waters run;

Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;  
But tho' I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;  
My love is vaster passion now;  
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature  
thou,

I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
I have thee still, and I rejoice  
I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI  
O living will that shalt endure  
When all that seems shall suffer  
shock,  
Rise in the spiritual rock,  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them  
pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
A voice as unto him that hears,  
A cry above the conquer'd years  
To one that with us works, and  
trust,

With faith that comes of self-control  
The truths that never can be proved  
Until we close with all we loved,  
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,  
Demand not thou a marriage lay;  
In that it is thy marriage day  
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
Since first he told me that he loved  
A daughter of our house, nor proved  
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
Some thrice three years; they went  
and came,  
Remade the blood and changed the  
frame,  
And yet is love not less, but more;



No longer caring to embalm  
In dying songs a dead regret,  
But like a statue solid-set,  
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
Than in the summers that are flown,  
For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
As echoes out of weaker times,  
As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
That must be made a wife ere noon?  
She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower.

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
And then on thee; they meet thy look  
And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of Paradise.

O, when her life was yet in bud,  
He too foretold the perfect rose.  
For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy, full of power;  
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,  
And I must give away the bride;  
She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,  
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
That shielded all her life from harm,  
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;  
Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The 'Wilt thou?' answer'd, and  
again  
The 'Wilt thou?' ask'd, till out of  
twain  
Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be  
read,

Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
By village eyes as yet unborn.  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the  
trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them — maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave.  
They leave the porch, they pass the  
grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
For them the light of life increased,  
Who stay to share the morning feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
To meet and greet a whiter sun;  
My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
And hearts are warm'd and faces  
bloom,  
As drinking health to bride and  
groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
Perchance, perchance, among the  
rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
And those white-favor'd horses  
wait;  
They rise, but linger; it is late;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
From little cloudlets on the grass,  
But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park.

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
 And talk of others that are wed,  
 And how she look'd, and what he  
   said,  
 And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
 The shade of passing thought, the  
   wealth  
 Of words and wit, the double health,  
 The crowning cup, the three-times-  
   three,

And last the dance ; — till I retire.  
 Dumb is that tower which spake so  
   loud,  
 And high in heaven the streaming  
   cloud,  
 And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
 Till over down and over dale  
 All night the shining vapor sail  
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing  
   rills,  
 And catch at every mountain head,  
 And o'er the friths that branch and  
   spread  
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
 With tender gloom the roof, the  
   wall.

And breaking let the splendor fall  
 To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
 And, star and system rolling past,  
 A soul shall draw from out the vast  
 And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
 Result in man, be born and think,  
 And act and love, a closer link  
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
 On knowledge ; under whose com-  
   mand  
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their  
   hand  
 Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
 For all we thought and loved and  
   did,  
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
 Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man that with me trod  
 This planet was a noble type  
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
 That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
 One God, one law, one element,  
 And one far-off divine event,  
 To which the whole creation moves.



‘I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood’

## MAUD AND OTHER POEMS

### MAUD ; A MONODRAMA

#### PART I

#### I

#### I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind  
the little wood ;  
Its lips in the field above are dabbled  
with blood-red heath.  
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent  
horror of blood,  
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her,  
answers ‘Death.’

#### II

For there in the ghastly pit long since  
a body was found,  
His who had given me life — O father !  
O God ! was it well ? —  
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd,  
and dinted into the ground ;  
There yet lies the rock that fell with  
him when he fell.

#### III

Did he fling himself down ? who  
knows ? for a vast speculation  
had fail'd,

And ever he mutter'd and madden'd,  
and ever wann'd with despair, 10  
And out he walk'd when the wind like  
a broken worldling wail'd,  
And the flying gold of the ruin'd wood-  
lands drove thro' the air.

## IV

I remember the time, for the roots of  
my hair were stirr'd  
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight  
trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,  
And my pulses closed their gates with  
a shock on my heart as I heard  
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother  
divide the shuddering night.

## V

Villainy somewhere! whose? One  
says, we are villains all.  
Not he; his honest fame should at least  
by me be maintained;  
But that old man, now lord of the  
broad estate and the Hall,  
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that  
had left us flaccid and drain'd. 20

## VI

Why do they prate of the blessings of  
peace? we have made them a  
curse,  
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all  
that is not its own;  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain,  
is it better or worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing  
in war on his own hearthstone?

## VII

But these are the days of advance, the  
works of the men of mind,  
When who but a fool would have faith  
in a tradesman's ware or his  
word?  
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I  
think, and that of a kind  
The viler, as underhand, not openly  
bearing the sword.

## VIII

Sooner or later I too may passively  
take the print  
Of the golden age—why not? I have  
neither hope nor trust; 30  
May make my heart as a millstone, set  
my face as a flint,

Cheat and be cheated, and die—who  
knows? we are ashes and dust.

## IX

Peace sitting under her olive, and  
slurring the days gone by,  
When the poor are hovell'd and hus-  
tled together, each sex, like  
swine,  
When only the ledger lives, and when  
only not all men lie;  
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a  
company forges the wine.

## X

And the vitriol madness flushes up in  
the ruffian's head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell  
of the trampled wife,  
And chalk and alum and plaster are  
sold to the poor for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the  
very means of life, 40

## XI

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for  
the villainous centre-bits  
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush  
of the moonless nights,  
While another is cheating the sick of  
a few last gasps, as he sits  
'To pestle a poison'd poison behind his  
crimson lights.

## XII

When a Mammonite mother kills her  
babe for a burial fee,  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile  
of children's bones,  
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud  
war by land and by sea,  
War with a thousand battles, and shak-  
ing a hundred thrones!

## XIII

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came  
yonder round by the hill,  
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from  
the three-decker out of the  
foam, 50  
That the smooth-faced, snub-nosed  
rogue would leap from his  
counter and till,  
And strike, if he could, were it but  
with his cheating yardwand,  
home.—

## XIV

What! am I raging alone as my father  
 raged in his mood?  
 Must I too creep to the hollow and  
 dash myself down and die  
 Rather than hold by the law that I  
 made, nevermore to brood  
 On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a  
 wretched swindler's lie?

## XV

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there  
 was *love* in the passionate shriek,  
 Love for the silent thing that had made  
 false haste to the grave —  
 Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and  
 thought he would rise and speak  
 And rave at the lie and the liar, ah  
 God, as he used to rave. 60

## XVI

I am sick of the Hall and the hill,  
 I am sick of the moor and the  
 main.  
 Why should I stay? can a sweeter  
 chance ever come to me here?  
 O, having the nerves of motion as  
 well as the nerves of pain,  
 Were it not wise if I fled from the  
 place and the pit and the fear?

## XVII

Workmen up at the Hall! — they are  
 coming back from abroad;  
 The dark old place will be guilt by the  
 touch of a millionaire.  
 I have heard, I know not whence, of  
 the singular beauty of Maud;  
 I play'd with the girl when a child;  
 she promised then to be fair.

## XVIII

Maud, with her venturous climbings  
 and tumbles and childish es-  
 capes,  
 Maud, the delight of the village, the  
 ringing joy of the Hall, 70  
 Maud, with her sweet purse-mouth  
 when my father dangled the  
 grapes,  
 Maud, the beloved of my mother, the  
 moon-faced darling of all, —

## XIX

What is she now? My dreams are bad.  
 She may bring me a curse.

No, there is fatter game on the moor;  
 she will let me alone.

Thanks; for the fiend best knows  
 whether woman or man be the  
 worse.

I will bury myself in myself, and the  
 Devil may pipe to his own.

## II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm;  
 God grant I may find it at  
 last!

It will never be broken by Maud; she  
 has neither savor nor salt,

But a cold and clear-cut face, as I  
 found when her carriage past,

Perfectly beautiful; let it be granted  
 her; where is the fault? 80

All that I saw — for her eyes were  
 downcast, not to be seen —

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splen-  
 didly null,

Dead perfection, no more; nothing  
 more, if it had not been

For a chance of travel, a paleness, an  
 hour's defect of the rose,

Or an underlip, you may call it a little  
 too ripe, too full,

Or the least little delicate aquiline  
 curve in a sensitive nose,

From which I escaped heart-free, with  
 the least little touch of spleen.

## III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you  
 so cruelly meek,

Breaking a slumber in which all  
 spleenful folly was drown'd?

Pale with the golden beam of an eye-  
 lash dead on the cheek, 90

Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet  
 on a gloom profound;

Womanlike, taking revenge too deep  
 for a transient wrong

Done but in thought to your beauty,  
 and ever as pale as before

Growing and fading and growing  
 upon me without a sound,

Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, death-  
 like, half the night long

Growing and fading and growing, till  
 I could bear it no more,

But arose, and all by myself in my  
own dark garden ground,  
Listening now to the tide in its broad-  
flung shipwrecking roar,  
Now to the scream of a madden'd  
beach dragg'd down by the  
wave,  
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly  
glimmer, and found <sup>100</sup>  
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion  
low in his grave.

## IV

## I

A million emeralds break from the  
ruby-budded line  
In the little grove where I sit — ah,  
wherefore cannot I be  
Like things of the season gay, like the  
bountiful season bland,  
When the far-off sail is blown by the  
breeze of a softer clime,  
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of  
a crescent of sea,  
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage  
ring of the land ?

## II

Below me, there, is the village, and  
looks how quiet and small !  
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with  
gossip, scandal, and spite ;  
And Jack on his ale-house bench has  
as many lies as a Czar ; <sup>110</sup>  
And here on the landward side,  
by a red rock, glimmers the  
Hall ;  
And up in the high Hall-garden I see  
her pass like a light ;  
But sorrow seize me if ever that light  
be my leading star !

## III

When have I bow'd to her father, the  
wrinkled head of the race ?  
I met her to-day with her brother, but  
not to her brother I bow'd ;  
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode  
by on the moor,  
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd  
over her beautiful face.  
O child, you wrong your beauty, be-  
lieve it, in being so proud ;  
Your father has wealth well-gotten,  
and I am nameless and poor.

## IV

I keep but a man and a maid, ever  
ready to slander and steal ; <sup>120</sup>  
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile,  
like a stoic, or like  
A wiser epicurean, and let the world  
have its way  
For nature is one with rapine, a harm  
no preacher can heal ;  
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow,  
the sparrow spear'd by the  
shrike,  
And the whole little world where I sit  
is a world of plunder and prey.

## V

We are puppets, Man in his pride,  
and Beauty fair in her flower ;  
Do we move ourselves, or are moved  
by an unseen hand at a game  
That pushes us off from the board,  
and others ever succeed ?  
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each  
other here for an hour ;  
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle,  
and grin at a brother's shame ;  
However we brave it out, we men are  
a little breed. <sup>131</sup>

## VI

A monstrous eft was of old the lord  
and master of earth,  
For him did his high sun flame, and  
his river billowing ran,  
And he felt himself in his force to be  
Nature's crowning race.  
As nine months go to the shaping an  
infant ripe for his birth,  
So many a million of ages have gone  
to the making of man :  
He now is first, but is he the last ? is  
he not too base ?

## VII

The man of science himself is fond of  
glory, and vain,  
An eye well-practised in nature, a  
spirit bounded and poor ;  
The passionate heart of the poet is  
whirl'd into folly and vice. <sup>140</sup>  
I would not marvel at either, but keep  
a temperate brain ;  
For not to desire or admire, if a man  
could learn it, were more  
Than to walk all day like the sultan  
of old in a garden of spice.

## VIII

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an  
Isis hid by the veil.

Who knows the ways of the world,  
how God will bring them  
about?

Our planet is one, the suns are many,  
the world is wide.

Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I  
shriek if a Hungary fail?

Or an infant civilization be ruled with  
rod or with knout?

*I have not made the world, and He  
that made it will guide.*

## IX

Be mine a philosopher's life in the  
quiet woodland ways, <sup>150</sup>

Where if I cannot be gay let a pas-  
sionless peace be my lot,

Far-off from the clamor of liars belied  
in the hubbub of lies;

From the long-neck'd geese of the  
world that are ever hissing dis-  
praise

Because their natures are little, and,  
whether he heed it or not,

Where each man walks with his head  
in a cloud of poisonous flies.

## X

And most of all would I flee from the  
cruel madness of love,

The honey of poison-flowers and all  
the measureless ill.

Ah, Maud, you milk-white fawn, you  
are all unmeet for a wife.

Your mother is mute in her grave as  
her image in marble above;

Your father is ever in London, you  
wander about at your will; <sup>160</sup>

You have but fed on the roses and  
lain in the lilies of life.

## V

## I

A voice by the cedar tree  
In the meadow under the Hall!

She is singing an air that is known to  
me,

A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
A martial song like a trumpet's call!

Singing alone in the morning of life,  
In the happy morning of life and of

May,

Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand, <sup>170</sup>  
March with banner and bugle and  
fife

To the death, for their native land.

## II

Maud with her exquisite face,  
And wild voice pealing up to the  
sunny sky,

And feet like sunny gems on an Eng-  
lish green,

Maud in the light of her youth and  
her grace,

Singing of Death, and of Honor that  
cannot die,

Till I well could weep for a time so  
sordid and mean,

And myself so languid and base.

## III

Silence, beautiful voice! <sup>180</sup>

Be still, for you only trouble the  
mind

With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
A glory I shall not find.

Still! I will hear you no more,  
For your sweetness hardly leaves me

a choice

But to move to the meadow and fall  
before

Her feet on the meadow grass, and  
adore,

Not her, who is neither courtly nor  
kind,

Not her, not her, but a voice.

## VI

## I

Morning arises stormy and pale, <sup>190</sup>

No sun, but a wannish glare  
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud;

And the budded peaks of the wood  
are bow'd,

Caught, and cuff'd by the gale:

I had fancied it would be fair.

## II

Whom but Maud should I meet  
Last night, when the sunset burn'd

On the blossom'd gable-ends  
At the head of the village street,

Whom but Maud should I meet? <sup>200</sup>  
And she touch'd my hand with a smile

so sweet,

She made me divine amends  
For a courtesy not return'd.

### III

And thus a delicate spark  
Of glowing and growing light  
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark  
Kept itself warm in the heart of my  
dreams,  
Ready to burst in a color'd flame;  
Till at last, when the morning came  
In a cloud, it faded, and seems 210  
But an ashen-gray delight.

### IV

What if with her sunny hair,  
And smile as sunny as cold,  
She meant to weave me a snare  
Of some coquettish deceit,  
Cleopatra-like as of old  
To entangle me when we met,  
To have her lion roll in a silken net  
And fawn at a victor's feet.

### V

Ah, what shall I be at fifty 220  
Should Nature keep me alive,  
If I find the world so bitter  
When I am but twenty-five?  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile were all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

### VI

What if, tho' her eye seem'd full  
Of a kind intent to me, 230  
What if that dandy-despot, he,  
That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian bull  
Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
Her brother, from whom I keep  
aloof,  
Who wants the finer politic sense  
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—  
What if he had told her yesternorn  
How prettily for his own sweet  
sake 240  
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
That so, when the rotten hustings  
shake  
In another month to his brazen lies,  
A wretched vote may be gain'd?

### VII

For a raven ever croaks, at my  
side,  
Keep watch and ward, keep watch  
and ward,  
Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,  
For often a man's own angry pride 250  
Is cap and bells for a fool.

### VIII

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
For am I not, am I not, here alone  
So many a summer since she died,  
My mother, who was so gentle and  
good?  
Living alone in an empty house,  
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
Where I hear the dead at midday  
moan,  
And the shrieking rush of the wain-  
scot mouse, 260  
And my own sad name in corners  
cried,  
When the shiver of dancing leaves is  
thrown  
About its echoing chambers wide,  
Till a morbid hate and horror have  
grown  
Of a world in which I have hardly  
mixt,  
And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

### IX

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and  
caught  
By that you swore to withstand?  
For what was it else within me  
wrought 270  
But, I fear, the new strong wine of  
love,  
That made my tongue to stammer and  
trip  
When I saw the treasured splendor,  
her hand,  
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

### X

I have play'd with her when a  
child;  
She remembers it now we meet.  
Ah, well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled  
By some coquettish deceit.



Yet, if she were not a cheat, 280  
 If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
 And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
 Then the world were not so bitter  
 But a smile could make it sweet.

## VII

## I

Did I hear it half in a doze  
 Long since, I know not where ?  
 Did I dream it an hour ago,  
 When asleep in this arm-chair ?

## II

Men were drinking together,  
 Drinking and talking of me : 290  
 'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
 Will have plenty ; so let it be.'

## III

Is it an echo of something  
 Read with a boy's delight,  
 Viziers nodding together  
 In some Arabian night ?

## IV

Strange, that I hear two men,  
 Somewhere, talking of me :  
 'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy  
 Will have plenty ; so let it be.' 300

## VIII

She came to the village church,  
 And sat by a pillar alone ;  
 An angel watching an urn  
 Wept over her, carved in stone ;  
 And once, but once, she lifted her  
 eyes,  
 And suddenly, sweetly, strangely  
 blush'd  
 To find they were met by my own ;  
 And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat  
 stronger  
 And thicker, until I heard no longer  
 The snowy-banded, dilettante, 310  
 Delicate-handed priest intone ;  
 And thought, is it pride ? and mused  
 and sigh'd,  
 'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

## IX

I was walking a mile,  
 More than a mile from the shore,

The sun look'd out with a smile  
 Betwixt the cloud and the moor :  
 And riding at set of day  
 Over the dark moor land,  
 Rapidly riding far away, 320  
 She waved to me with her hand.  
 There were two at her side,  
 Something flash'd in the sun,  
 Down by the hill I saw them ride,  
 In a moment they were gone ;  
 Like a sudden spark  
 Struck vainly in the night,  
 Then returns the dark  
 With no more hope of light.

## X

## I

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread ? 330  
 Was not one of the two at her side  
 This new-made lord, whose splendor  
 plucks  
 The slavish hat from the villager's  
 head ?  
 Whose old grandfather has lately died,  
 Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
 Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
 And laying his trams in a poison'd  
 gloom  
 Wrought, till he crept from a gutted  
 mine  
 Master of half a servile shire, 339  
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
 To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
 Rich in the grace all women desire,  
 Strong in the power that all men  
 adore,  
 And simper and set their voices lower,  
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
 New as his title, built last year,  
 There amid perky larches and pine,  
 And over the sullen-purple moor — 350  
 Look at it — pricking a cockney ear.

## II

What, has he found my jewel out ?  
 For one of the two that rode at her side  
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was  
 he ;  
 Bound for the Hall, and I think for a  
 bride.  
 Blithe would her brother's acceptance  
 be.  
 Maud could be gracious too, no doubt.



'She came to the village church,  
And sat by a pillar alone'

To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
A bought commission, a waxen face,  
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape —  
Bought ? what is it he cannot buy ? <sup>361</sup>  
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,  
A wounded thing with a rancorous  
cry,  
At war with myself and a wretched  
race,  
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

### III

Last week came one to the county  
town,  
To preach our poor little army down,  
And play the game of the despot  
kings,

Tho' the state has done it and thrice  
as well.  
This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy  
things, <sup>370</sup>  
Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton,  
and rings  
Even in dreams to the chink of his  
pence,  
This huckster put down war ! can he  
tell  
Whether war be a cause or a conse-  
quence ?  
Put down the passions that make earth  
hell !  
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
Jealousy, down ! cut off from the mind  
The bitter springs of anger and fear !

Down too, down at your own fireside,  
With the evil tongue and the evil  
ear,  
For each is at war with mankind! 380

## IV

I wish I could hear again  
The chivalrous battle-song  
That she warbled alone in her joy!  
I might persuade myself then  
She would not do herself this great  
wrong,  
To take a wanton dissolute boy  
For a man and leader of men.

## V

Ah God, for a man with heart, head,  
hand,  
Like some of the simple great ones  
gone 390  
For ever and ever by,  
One still strong man in a blatant land,  
Whatever they call him—what care  
I?—  
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one  
Who can rule and dare not lie!

## VI

And ah for a man to arise in me,  
That the man I am may cease to be!

## XI

## I

O, let the solid ground  
Not fail beneath my feet  
Before my life has found 400  
What some have found so sweet!  
Then let come what come may,  
What matter if I go mad,  
I shall have had my day.

## II

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
Not close and darken above me  
Before I am quite quite sure  
That there is one to love me!  
Then let come what come may  
To a life that has been so sad, 410  
I shall have had my day.

## XII

## I

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling,

Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling.

## II

Where was Maud? in our wood;  
And I—who else?—was with  
her,  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together.

## III

Birds in our wood sang 420  
Ringing thro' the valleys,  
Maud is here, here, here  
In among the lilies.

## IV

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately;  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.

## V

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favor!  
O, Maud were sure of heaven 430  
If lowliness could save her!

## VI

I know the way she went  
Home with her maiden posy,  
For her feet have touch'd the mea-  
dows  
And left the daisies rosy.

## VII

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
Were crying and calling to her,  
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?  
One is come to woo her.

## VIII

Look, a horse at the door, 440  
And little King Charley snarl-  
ing!  
Go back, my lord, across the moor.  
You are not her darling.

## XIII

## I

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I  
scorn,  
Is that a matter to make me fret?  
That a calamity hard to be borne?  
Well, he may live to hate me yet.

Fool that I am to be vext with his  
pride!

I past him, I was crossing his lands;  
He stood on the path a little aside;<sup>450</sup>  
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and  
white,  
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;  
But his essences turn'd the live air  
sick,  
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his  
hands.

### II

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair?  
I long'd so heartily then and there  
To give him the grasp of fellowship;  
But while I past he was humming an  
air,<sup>460</sup>  
Stopt, and then with a riding-whip  
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
And curving a contumelious lip,  
Gorgonized me from head to foot  
With a stony British stare.

### III

Why sits he here in his father's chair?  
That old man never comes to his place;  
Shall I believe him ashamed to be  
seen?  
For only once, in the village street,  
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his  
face,<sup>470</sup>  
A gray old wolf and a lean.  
Scarcely, now, would I call him a  
cheat;  
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
She might by a true descent be un-  
true;  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet,  
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
To the sweeter blood by the other side;  
Her mother has been a thing complete,  
However she came to be so allied.  
And fair without, faithful within,<sup>480</sup>  
Maud to him is nothing akin.  
Some peculiar mystic grace  
Made her only the child of her mother,  
And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
All, all upon the brother.

### IV

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!  
Has not his sister smiled on me?

## XIV

### I

Maud has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn;<sup>490</sup>  
There she walks in her state  
And tends upon bed and bower,  
And thither I climb'd at dawn  
And stood by her garden-gate.  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

### II

Maud's own little oak-room —  
Which Maud, like a precious stone  
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
Lights with herself, when alone<sup>500</sup>  
She sits by her music and books  
And her brother lingers late  
With a roystering company — looks  
Upon Maud's own garden-gate;  
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as  
white  
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
On the hasp of the window, and my  
Delight  
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious  
ghost, to glide,  
Like a beam of the seventh heaven,  
down to my side,  
There were but a step to be made.<sup>510</sup>

### III

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
And again seem'd overbold;  
Now I thought that she cared for  
me,  
Now I thought she was kind  
Only because she was cold.

### IV

I heard no sound where I stood  
But the rivulet on from the lawn  
Running down to my own dark wood,  
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as  
it swell'd  
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;  
But I look'd, and round, all round the  
house I beheld<sup>521</sup>  
The death-white curtain drawn,  
Felt a horror over me creep,  
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
Knew that the death-white curtain  
meant but sleep,  
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a  
fool of the sleep of death.

## XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
 And I make myself such evil cheer,  
 That if I be dear to some one else,  
 Then some one else may have much  
 to fear; 530  
 But if I be dear to some one else,  
 Then I should be to myself more  
 dear.  
 Shall I not take care of all that I  
 think,  
 Yea, even of wretched meat and drink,  
 If I be dear,  
 If I be dear to some one else?

## XVI

## I

This lump of earth has left his estate  
 The lighter by the loss of his weight;  
 And so that he find what he went to  
 seek,  
 And fulsome pleasure clog him, and  
 drown 540  
 His heart in the gross mud-honey of  
 town,  
 He may stay for a year who has gone  
 for a week.  
 But this is the day when I must  
 speak,  
 And I see my Oread coming down,  
 O, this is the day!  
 O beautiful creature, what am I  
 That I dare to look her way?  
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her  
 breast,  
 And dream of her beauty with tender  
 dread, 550  
 From the delicate Arab arch of her  
 feet  
 To the grace that, bright and light as  
 the crest  
 Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
 And she knows it not—O, if she  
 knew it,  
 To know her beauty might half undo  
 it!  
 I know it the one bright thing to  
 save  
 My yet young life in the wilds of  
 Time,  
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from  
 crime,  
 Perhaps from a selfish grave.

## II

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool  
 lord, 560  
 Dare I bid her abide by her word?  
 Should I love her so well if she  
 Had given her word to a thing so low?  
 Shall I love her as well if she  
 Can break her word were it even for  
 me?  
 I trust that it is not so.

## III

Catch not my breath, O clamorous  
 heart,  
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my  
 eye.  
 For I must tell her before we part,  
 I must tell her, or die. 570

## XVII

Go not, happy day,  
 From the shining fields,  
 Go not, happy day,  
 Till the maiden yields,  
 Rosy is the West,  
 'Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
 And a rose her mouth.  
 When the happy Yes  
 Falters from her lips, 580  
 Pass and blush the news  
 Over glowing ships;  
 Over blowing seas,  
 Over seas at rest,  
 Pass the happy news,  
 Blush it thro' the West;  
 Till the red man dance  
 By his red cedar-tree,  
 And the red man's babe  
 Leap, beyond the sea. 590  
 Blush from West to East,  
 Blush from East to West,  
 Till the West is East,  
 Blush it thro' the West.  
 Rosy is the West,  
 Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
 And a rose her mouth.

## XVIII

## I

I have led her home, my love, my  
 only friend.  
 There is none like her, none. 600

And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
And sweetly, on and on  
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

## II

None like her, none.  
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk  
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,  
And shook my heart to think she comes once more.  
But even then I heard her close the door;  
The gates of heaven are closed, and she is gone. 610

## III

There is none like her, none,  
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.  
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,  
Sighing for Lebanon,  
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,  
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
And looking to the South and fed  
With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
And haunted by the starry head 620  
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,  
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;  
And over whom thy darkness must have spread  
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great  
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom she came?

## IV

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,  
And you fair stars that crown a happy day  
Go in and out as if at merry play,  
Who am no more so all forlorn 630  
As when it seem'd far better to be born

To labor and the mattock-harden'd hand  
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand  
A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,  
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand  
His nothingness into man.

## V

But now shine on, and what care I,  
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl 640  
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,  
And do accept my madness, and would die  
To save from some slight shame one simple girl?—

## VI

Would die, for sullen-seeming Death may give  
More life to Love than is or ever was  
In our low world, where yet 't is sweet to live.  
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;  
It seems that I am happy, that to me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass, 649  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

## VII

Not die, but live a life of truest breath,  
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.  
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,  
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?  
Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,  
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?  
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here  
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear.'

## VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
Of the long waves that roll in yonder  
bay ? <sup>661</sup>

And hark the clock within, the silver  
knell

Of twelve sweet hours that past in  
bridal white,

And died to live, long as my pulses  
play ;

But now by this my love has closed  
her sight

And given false death her hand, and  
stolen away

To dreamful wastes where footless  
fancies dwell

Among the fragments of the golden  
day.

May nothing there her maiden grace  
affright !

Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy  
spell. <sup>670</sup>

My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
My own heart's heart, my ownest own,  
farewell ;

It is but for a little space I go.

And ye meanwhile far over moor and  
fell

Beat to the noiseless music of the night !  
Has our whole earth gone nearer to  
the glow

Of your soft splendors that you look  
so bright ?

I have climb'd nearer out of lonely  
hell.

Beat, happy stars, timing with things  
below,

Beat with my heart more blest than  
heart can tell, <sup>680</sup>

Blest, but for some dark undercurrent  
woe

That seems to draw — but it shall not  
be so ;

Let all be well, be well.

## XIX

## I

Her brother is coming back to-night,  
Breaking up my dream of delight.

## II

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?  
I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
O, when did a morning shine  
So rich in atonement as this

For my dark-dawning youth, <sup>690</sup>  
Darken'd watching a mother decline  
And that dead man at her heart and  
mine ;

For who was left to watch her but I ?  
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

## III

I trust that I did not talk  
To gentle Maud in our walk —

For often in lonely wanderings  
I have cursed him even to lifeless  
things —

But I trust that I did not talk,  
Not touch on her father's sin. <sup>700</sup>

I am sure I did but speak  
Of my mother's faded cheek

When it slowly grew so thin  
That I felt she was slowly dying

Vext with lawyers and harass'd with  
debt ;

For how often I caught her with eyes  
all wet,

Shaking her head at her son and sigh-  
ing

A world of trouble within !

## IV

And Maud too, Maud was moved  
To speak of the mother she loved <sup>710</sup>

As one scarce less forlorn,  
Dying abroad and it seems apart

From him who had ceased to share  
her heart,

And ever mourning over the feud,  
The household Fury sprinkled with  
blood

By which our houses are torn.  
How strange was what she said,

When only Maud and the brother  
Hung over her dying bed —

That Maud's dark father and mine <sup>720</sup>  
Had bound us one to the other,

Betrothed us over their wine,  
On the day when Maud was born ;

Seal'd her mine from her first sweet  
breath !

Mine, mine by a right, from birth till  
death !

Mine, mine — our fathers have sworn !

## V

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat  
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,  
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so  
sweet ;

And none of us thought of a something  
beyond,

A desire that awoke in the heart of  
the child,

As it were a duty done to the  
tomb,

To be friends for her sake, to be rec-  
onciled ;

And I was cursing them and my  
doom,

And letting a dangerous thought run  
wild

While often abroad in the fragrant  
gloom

Of foreign churches — I see her there,  
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer  
To be friends, to be reconciled !

# VI

But then what a flint is he !

Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,

I find whenever she touch'd on me

This brother had laugh'd her down,

And at last, when each came home,

He had darken'd into a frown,

Chid her, and forbid her to speak

To me, her friend of the years be-  
fore ;

And this was what had redden'd her  
cheek

When I bow'd to her on the moor.

# VII

Yet Maud, altho' not blind

To the faults of his heart and mind,

I see she cannot but love him,

And says he is rough but kind,

And wishes me to approve him,

And tells me, when she lay

Sick once, with a fear of worse,

That he left his wine and horses and  
play,

Sat with her, read to her, night and  
day,

And tended her like a nurse.

# VIII

Kind ? but the death-bed desire

Spurn'd by this heir of the liar —

Rough but kind ? yet I know

He has plotted against me in this,

That he plots against me still.

Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.

Well, rough but kind ; why, let it be  
so,

For shall not Maud have her will ?

# IX

For, Maud, so tender and true,

As long as my life endures

I feel I shall owe you a debt

That I never can hope to pay ;

And if ever I should forget

That I owe this debt to you

And for your sweet sake to yours,

O, then, what then shall I say ? —

If ever I *should* forget,

May God make me more wretched

Than ever I have been yet !

# X

So now I have sworn to bury

All this dead body of hate,

I feel so free and so clear

By the loss of that dead weight,

That I should grow light-headed, I

fear,

Fantastically merry,

But that her brother comes, like a

blight

On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

# XX

# I

Strange, that I felt so gay,

Strange, that I tried to-day

To beguile her melancholy ;

The Sultan, as we name him —

She did not wish to blame him —

But he vexed her and perplexed her

With his worldly talk and folly.

Was it gentle to reprove her

For stealing out of view

From a little lazy lover

Who but claims her as his due ?

Or for chilling his caresses

By the coldness of her manners,

Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?

Now I know her but in two,

Nor can pronounce upon it

If one should ask me whether

The habit, hat, and feather,

Or the frock and gipsy bonnet

Be the neater and completer ;

For nothing can be sweeter

Than maiden Maud in either.

# II

But to-morrow, if we live,

Our ponderous squire will give

A grand political dinner

To half the squirrels near ;



And Maud will wear her jewels,  
And the bird of prey will hover,  
And the titmouse hope to win her  
With his chirrup at her ear.

## III

A grand political dinner  
To the men of many acres,  
A gathering of the Tory,  
A dinner and then a dance 820  
For the maids and marriage-makers,  
And every eye but mine will glance  
At Maud in all her glory.

## IV

For I am not invited,  
But, with the Sultan's pardon,  
I am all as well delighted,  
For I know her own rose-garden,  
And mean to linger in it  
Till the dancing will be over ;  
And then, O, then, come out to me 830  
For a minute, but for a minute,  
Come out to your own true lover,  
That your true lover may see  
Your glory also, and render  
All homage to his own darling,  
Queen Maud in all her splendor.

## XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,  
And bringing me down from the  
Hall  
This garden-rose that I found,  
Forgetful of Maud and me, 840  
And lost in trouble and moving round  
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
And trying to pass to the sea ;  
O rivulet, born at the Hall,  
My Maud has sent it by thee —  
If I read her sweet will right —  
On a blushing mission to me,  
Saying in odor and color, 'Ah, be  
Among the roses to-night.'

## XXII

## I

Come into the garden, Maud, 850  
For the black bat, night, has flown,  
Come into the garden, Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone ;  
And the woodbine spices are wafted  
abroad,  
And the musk of the rose is blown.

## II

For a breeze of morning moves,  
And the planet of Love is on high,  
Beginning to faint in the light that  
she loves  
On a bed of daffodil sky,  
To faint in the light of the sun she  
loves, 860  
To faint in his light, and to die.

## III

All night have the roses heard  
The flute, violin, bassoon ;  
All night has the casement jessamine  
stirr'd  
To the dancers dancing in tune ;  
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
And a hush with the setting moon.

## IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one,  
With whom she has heart to be  
gay.  
When will the dancers leave her alone ?  
She is weary of dance and play.' 871  
Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
And half to the rising day ;  
Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
The last wheel echoes away.

## V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes  
In babble and revel and wine.  
O young lord-lover, what sighs are  
those,  
For one that will never be thine ?  
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to  
the rose, 880  
'For ever and ever, mine.'

## VI

And the soul of the rose went into my  
blood,  
As the music clash'd in the hall ;  
And long by the garden lake I stood,  
For I heard your rivulet fall  
From the lake to the meadow and on  
to the wood,  
Our wood, that is dearer than all ;

## VII

From the meadow your walks have  
left so sweet  
That whenever a March-wind sighs  
He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
In violets blue as your eyes, 891

To the woody hollows in which we  
meet  
And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII

The slender acacia would not shake  
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;  
The white lake-blossom fell into the  
lake  
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;  
But the rose was awake all night for  
your sake,  
Knowing your promise to me ;  
The lilies and roses were all awake, 900  
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of  
girls,  
Come hither, the dances are done,  
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
Queen lily and rose in one ;  
Shine out, little head, sunning over  
with curls,  
To the flowers, and be their sun.

X

There has fallen a splendid tear  
From the passion-flower at the  
gate.  
She is coming, my dove, my dear ; 910  
She is coming, my life, my fate.  
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she  
is near ;'  
And the white rose weeps, 'She is  
late ;'  
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I  
hear ;'  
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;  
Were it ever so airy a tread,  
My heart would hear her and beat,  
Were it earth in an earthy bed ;  
My dust would hear her and beat, 920  
Had I lain for a century dead,  
Would start and tremble under her  
feet,  
And blossom in purple and red.



'Come into the garden, Maud'

## PART II

## I

## I

'The fault was mine, the fault was mine'—

Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,

Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—

It is this guilty hand!—

And there rises ever a passionate cry

From underneath in the darkening land—

What is it, that has been done?

O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,

The fires of hell brake out of thy rising sun,

The fires of hell and of hate; 10  
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,

When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,

He came with the babe-faced lord, Heap'd on her terms of disgrace;

And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,

He fiercely gave me the lie, Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,

And he struck me, madman, over the face,

Struck me before the languid fool, Who was gaping and grinning by; 20

Struck for himself an evil stroke, Wrought for his house an irredeem-

able woe.

For front to front in an hour we stood, And a million horrible bellowing

echoes broke From the red-ribb'd hollow behind

the wood, And thunder'd up into heaven the

Christless code That must have life for a blow.

Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.

Was it he lay there with a fading eye?

'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly!' 30

Then glided out of the joyous wood The ghastly Wraith of one that I

know,

And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,  
A cry for a brother's blood;  
It will ring in my heart and my ears,  
till I die, till I die.

## II

Is it gone? my pulses beat—  
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?

Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
A shadow there at my feet,

High over the shadowy land. 40  
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a

gentle rain,  
When they should burst and drown

with deluging storms  
The feeble vassals of wine and anger

and lust,  
The little hearts that know not how

to forgive.  
Arise, my God, and strike, for we

hold Thee just,  
Strike dead the whole weak race of

venomous worms,  
That sting each other here in the

dust;  
We are not worthy to live.

## II

## I

See what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl; 50

Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,

Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl,

How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design!

## II

What is it? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.

Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same. 60

## III

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will

That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door

Of his house in a rainbow frill?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,

A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world?

IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three-decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand !

70

V

Breton, not Briton ; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear —  
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,  
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
That never came from on high  
Nor ever arose from below,  
But only moves with the moving  
eye,  
Flying along the land and the main —  
Why should it look like Maud ?  
Am I to be overawed  
By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain ?

80

90

VI

Back from the Breton coast,  
Sick of a nameless fear,  
Back to the dark sea-line  
Looking, thinking of all I have  
lost ;  
An old song vexes my ear,  
But that of Lamech is mine.

VII

For years, a measureless ill,  
For years, for ever, to part —  
But she, she would love me still ;  
And as long, O God, as she  
Have a grain of love for me,  
So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
However weary, a spark of will  
Not to be trampled out.

100

VIII

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
With a passion so intense  
One would think that it well  
Might drown all life in the eye, —  
That it should, by being so over-  
wrought,  
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
For a shell, or a flower, little things

110

Which else would have been past by !  
And now I remember, I,  
When he lay dying there,  
I noticed one of his many rings —  
For he had many, poor worm -- and  
thought,  
It is his mother's hair.

IX

Who knows if he be dead ?  
Whether I need have fled ?  
Am I guilty of blood ?  
However this may be,  
Comfort her, comfort her, all things  
good,  
While I am over the sea !  
Let me and my passionate love go  
by,  
But speak to her all things holy and  
high,  
Whatever happen to me !  
Me and my harmful love go by ;  
But come to her waking, find her  
asleep,  
Powers of the height, Powers of the  
deep,  
And comfort her tho' I die !

20

130

III

Courage, poor heart of stone !  
I will not ask thee why  
Thou canst not understand  
That thou art left for ever alone ;  
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone ! --  
Or if I ask thee why,  
Care not thou to reply :  
She is but dead, and the time is at  
hand  
When thou shalt more than die.

140

IV

I

O that 't were possible  
After long grief and pain  
To find the arms of my true love  
Round me once again !

II

When I was wont to meet her  
In the silent woody places  
By the home that gave me birth,  
We stood tranced in long embraces  
Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter  
Than any thing on earth.

150

## III

A shadow flits before me,  
Not thou, but like to thee.  
Ah, Christ, that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might  
tell us  
What and where they be !

## IV

It leads me forth at evening,  
It lightly winds and steals  
In a cold white robe before me,  
When all my spirit reels 160  
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
And the roaring of the wheels.

## V

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies ;  
In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow,  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies. 170

## VI

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And a dewy splendor falls  
On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls ;  
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And the light and shadow fleet.  
She is walking in the meadow,  
And the woodland echo rings ;  
In a moment we shall meet. 180  
She is singing in the meadow,  
And the rivulet at her feet  
Ripples on in light and shadow  
To the ballad that she sings.

## VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
My bird with the shining head,  
My own dove with the tender eye ?  
But there rings on a sudden a passion-  
ate cry,  
There is some one dying or dead,  
And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;  
For a tumult shakes the city, 190  
And I wake, my dream is fled.  
In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
Without knowledge, without pity,  
By the curtains of my bed  
That abiding phantom cold !

## VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
Mix not memory with doubt,  
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
Pass and cease to move about !  
'T is the blot upon the brain 200  
That *will* show itself without.

## IX

Then I rise, the eave-drops fall,  
And the yellow vapors choke  
The great city sounding wide ;  
The day comes, a dull red ball  
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
On the misty river-tide.

## X

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
I steal, a wasted frame ;  
It crosses here, it crosses there, 210  
Thro' all that crowd confused and  
loud,  
The shadow still the same ;  
And on my heavy eyelids  
My anguish hangs like shame.

## XI

Alas for her that met me,  
That heard me softly call,  
Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall ! 220

## XII

Would the happy spirit descend  
From the realms of light and song,  
In the chamber or the street,  
As she looks among the blest,  
Should I fear to greet my friend  
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'  
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,  
To the regions of thy rest' ?

## XIII

But the broad light glares and beats,  
And the shadow flits and fleets 230  
And will not let me be ;  
And I loathe the squares and streets,  
And the faces that one meets,  
Hearts with no love for me.  
Always I long to creep  
Into some still cavern deep,  
There to weep, and weep, and  
weep  
My whole soul out to thee.

## V

## I

Dead, long dead,  
Long dead ! 240  
And my heart is a handful of dust,  
And the wheels go over my head,  
And my bones are shaken with pain,  
For into a shallow grave they are  
thrust,  
Only a yard beneath the street,  
And the hoofs of the horses beat,  
beat,  
The hoofs of the horses beat,  
Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
With never an end to the stream of  
passing feet,  
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and  
clatter ; 251  
And here beneath it is all as bad,  
For I thought the dead had peace, but  
it is not so.  
To have no peace in the grave, is that  
not sad ?  
But up and down and to and fro,  
Ever about me the dead men go ;  
And then to hear a dead man chatter  
Is enough to drive one mad.

## II

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
They cannot even bury a man ; 260  
And tho' we paid our tithes in the  
days that are gone,  
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was  
read.  
It is that which makes us loud in the  
world of the dead ;  
There is none that does his work, not  
one.  
A touch of their office might have  
sufficed,  
But the churchmen fain would kill  
their church,  
As the churches have kill'd their  
Christ.

## III

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
No limit to his distress ;  
And another, a lord of all things,  
praying 270  
To his own great self, as I guess ;  
And another, a statesman there, be-  
traying

His party-secret, fool, to the press ;  
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
The case of his patient — all for what ?  
To tickle the maggot born in an empty  
head,  
And wheedle a world that loves him  
not,  
For it is but a world of the dead.

## IV

Nothing but idiot gabble !  
For the prophecy given of old 280  
And then not understood,  
Has come to pass as foretold ;  
Not let any man think for the public  
good,  
But babble, merely for babble.  
For I never whisper'd a private affair  
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
No, not to myself in the closet alone,  
But I heard it shouted at once from  
the top of the house ;  
Everything came to be known.  
Who told *him* we were there ? 290

## V

Not that gray old wolf, for he came  
not back  
From the wilderness, full of wolves,  
where he used to lie ;  
He has gather'd the bones for his  
o'ergrown whelp to crack —  
Crack them now for yourself, and  
howl, and die.

## VI

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
And curse me the British vermin, the  
rat ;  
I know not whether he came in the  
Hanover ship,  
But I know that he lies and listens  
mute  
In an ancient mansion's crannies and  
holes.  
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it, 300  
Except that now we poison our babes,  
poor souls !  
It is all used up for that.

## VII

Tell him now : she is standing here at  
my head ;  
Not beautiful now, not even kind ;  
He may take her now ; for she never  
speaks her mind,

But is ever the one thing silent here.  
 She is not of us, as I divine ;  
 She comes from another stiller world  
     of the dead,  
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

## VIII

But I know where a garden grows, <sup>310</sup>  
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
 All made up of the lily and rose  
 That blow by night, when the season  
     is good,  
 To the sound of dancing music and  
     flutes :  
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
 And I almost fear they are not roses,  
     but blood ;  
 For the keeper was one, so full of  
     pride,  
 He linkt a dead man there to a spec-  
     tral bride ;  
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan of  
     brutes,  
 Would he have that hole in his side ?

## IX

But what will the old man say ? <sup>321</sup>  
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit  
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy  
     day ;  
 Yet now I could even weep to think  
     of it ;  
 For what will the old man say  
 When he comes to the second corpse  
     in the pit ?

## X

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
 Then to strike him and lay him low,  
 That were a public merit, far,  
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from  
     sin ; <sup>330</sup>  
 But the red life spilt for a private  
     blow—  
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless  
     war  
 Are scarcely even akin.

## XI

O me, why have they not buried me  
     deep enough ?  
 Is it kind to have made me a grave so  
     rough,  
 Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?  
 Maybe still I am but half-dead ;  
 Then I cannot be wholly dumb.

I will cry to the steps above my  
     head  
 And somebody, surely, some kind  
     heart will come <sup>340</sup>  
 To bury me, bury me  
 Deeper, ever so little deeper.

## PART III

## I

My life has crept so long on a broken  
     wing  
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of hor-  
     ror and fear,  
 That I come to be grateful at last for  
     a little thing  
 My mood is changed, for it fell at a  
     time of year  
 When the face of night is fair on the  
     dewy downs,  
 And the shining daffodil dies, and the  
     Charloteer  
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious  
     crowns  
 Over Orion's grave low down in the  
     west,  
 That like a silent lightning under the  
     stars  
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from  
     a band of the blest, <sup>10</sup>  
 And spoke of a hope for the world in  
     the coming wars—  
 'And in that hope, dear soul, let  
     trouble have rest,  
 Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed  
     to Mars  
 As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on  
     the Lion's breast.

## II

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded  
     a dear delight  
 To have look'd, tho' but in a dream,  
     upon eyes so fair,  
 That had been in a weary world my  
     one thing bright ;  
 And it was but a dream, yet it light-  
     en'd my despair  
 When I thought that a war would  
     arise in defence of the right,  
 That an iron tyranny now should  
     bend or cease, <sup>20</sup>  
 The glory of manhood stand on his  
     ancient height,  
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the mil-  
     lionaire.

No more shall commerce be all in all,  
 and Peace  
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid  
 note,  
 And watch her harvest ripen, her  
 herd increase,  
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a sloth-  
 ful shore,  
 And the cobweb woven across the  
 cannon's throat  
 Shall shake its threaded tears in the  
 wind no more.

## III

And as months ran on and rumor of  
 battle grew,  
 'It is time, it is time, O passionate  
 heart,' said I, —  
 For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to  
 be pure and true, —  
 'It is time, O passionate heart and  
 morbid eye,  
 That old hysterical mock-disease  
 should die.'  
 And I stood on a giant deck and mixt  
 my breath  
 With a loyal people shouting a battle-  
 cry,  
 Till I saw the dreary phantom arise  
 and fly  
 Far into the North, and battle, and  
 seas of death.

## IV

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the  
 higher aims  
 Of a land that has lost for a little her  
 lust of gold,  
 And love of a peace that was full of  
 wrongs and shames,  
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to  
 be told;  
 And hail once more to the banner of  
 battle unroll'd!  
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and  
 many shall weep  
 For those that are crush'd in the clash  
 of jarring claims,  
 Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd  
 on a giant liar,  
 And many a darkness into the light  
 shall leap,  
 And shine in the sudden making of  
 splendid names,  
 And noble thought be freer under the  
 sun,

And the heart of a people beat with  
 one desire;  
 For the peace, that I deem'd no peace,  
 is over and done,  
 And now by the side of the Black and  
 the Baltic deep,  
 And deathful-grinning mouths of the  
 fortress, flames  
 The blood-red blossom of war with a  
 heart of fire.

## V

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll  
 down like a wind,  
 We have proved we have hearts in a  
 cause, we are noble still,  
 And myself have awaked, as it seems,  
 to the better mind.  
 It is better to fight for the good than  
 to rail at the ill;  
 I have felt with my native land, I am  
 one with my kind,  
 I embrace the purpose of God, and  
 the doom assign'd.

## THE BROOK

'HERE by this brook we parted, I to  
 the East  
 And he for Italy — too late — too late:  
 One whom the strong sons of the  
 world despise;  
 For lucky rhymes to him were scrip  
 and share,  
 And mellow metres more than cent  
 for cent.  
 Nor could he understand how money  
 breeds,  
 Thought it a dead thing; yet himself  
 could make  
 The thing that is not as the thing that  
 is.  
 O, had he lived! In our schoolbooks  
 we say  
 Of those that held their heads above  
 the crowd,  
 They flourish'd then or then; but life  
 in him  
 Could scarce be said to flourish, only  
 touch'd  
 On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
 When all the wood stands in a mist  
 of green,  
 And nothing perfect. Yet the brook  
 he loved,



For which, in branding summers of  
Bengal,

Or even the sweet half-English Neil-  
gherry air,

I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
Prattling the primrose fancies of the  
boy

To me that loved him ; for " O brook,"  
he says, <sup>20</sup>

" O babbling brook," says Edmund  
in his rhyme,

" Whence come you ?" and the brook  
— why not ? — replies :

*I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally,  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley.*

*By thirty hills I hurry down,  
Or slip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorps, a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges.* <sup>30</sup>

*Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.*

' Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite  
worn out,

Travelling to Naples. There is Darn-  
ley bridge,

It has more ivy ; there the river ; and  
there

Stands Philip's farm where brook and  
river meet.

*I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,* <sup>40</sup>  
*I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles.*

*With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.*

*I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.* <sup>50</sup>

' But Philip chatter'd more than  
brook or bird,

Old Philip ; all about the fields you  
caught

His weary daylong chirping, like the  
dry

High-elbow'd grigs that leap in sum-  
mer grass.

*I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,*

*And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel* <sup>60</sup>  
*With many a silvery water-break  
Above the golden gravel,*

*And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.*

' O darling Katie Willows, his one  
child !

A maiden of our century, yet most  
meek ;

A daughter of our meadows, yet not  
coarse ;

Straight, but as lissome as a hazel  
wand ; <sup>70</sup>

Her eyes a bashful azure, and her  
hair

In gloss and hue the chestnut, when  
the shell

Divides threefold to show the fruit  
within.

' Sweet Katie, once I did her a good  
turn,

Her and her far-off cousin and be-  
trothed,

James Willows, of one name and heart  
with her.

For here I came, twenty years back  
— the week

Before I parted with poor Edmund —  
crost

By that old bridge which, half in  
ruins then,

Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the  
gleam <sup>80</sup>

Beyond it, where the waters marry —  
crost,

Whistling a random bar of Bonny  
Doon,

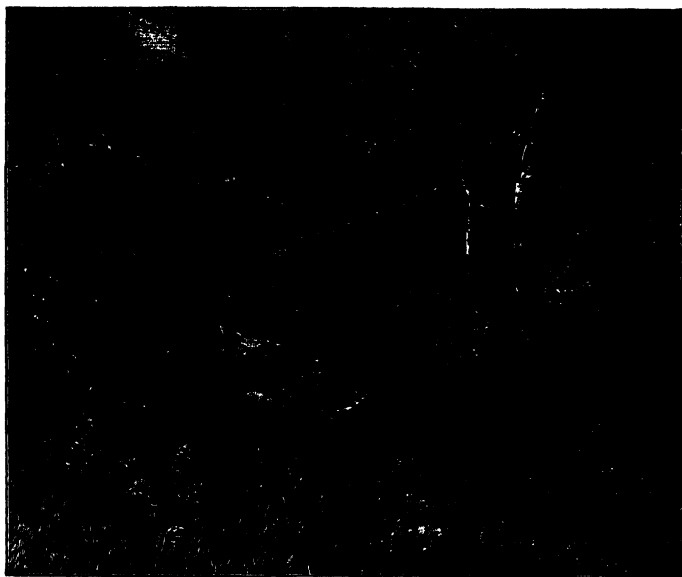
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate.  
The gate,

Half-parted from a weak and scolding  
hinge,

Stuck ; and he clamor'd from a case-  
ment, " Run,"

To Katie somewhere in the walks be-  
low,

" Run, Katie !" Katie never ran ; she  
moved



'I make a sudden sally  
And sparkle out among the fern'

To meet me, winding under woodbine  
bowers,  
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,  
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a  
boon. 90

'What was it? less of sentiment  
than sense  
Had Katie; not illiterate, nor of those  
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive  
tears,  
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philan-  
thropies,  
Divorce the Feeling from her mate  
the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had  
quarrell'd. Why?  
What cause of quarrel? None, she  
said, no cause;  
James had no cause: but when I prest  
the cause,  
I learnt that James had flickering  
jealousies  
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd  
James? I said. 100

But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once  
from mine,  
And sketching with her slender pointed  
foot

Some figure like a wizard pentagram  
On garden gravel, let my query pass  
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I  
ask'd

If James were coming. "Coming  
every day,"  
She answer'd, "ever longing to ex-  
plain,

But evermore her father came across  
With some long-winded tale, and broke  
him short;

And James departed vext with him  
and her." 110

How could I help her? "Would I—  
was it wrong?"—

Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere  
she spoke—

"O, would I take her father for one  
hour,  
For one half-hour, and let him talk to  
me!"

And even while she spoke, I saw where  
 James  
 Made toward us, like a wader in the  
 surf,  
 Beyond the brook, waist-deep in mea-  
 dow-sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your  
 sake!  
 For in I went, and call'd old Philip out  
 To show the farm. Full willingly he  
 rose ;  
 He led me thro' the short sweet-smell-  
 ing lanes<sup>121</sup>  
 Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he  
 went.  
 He praised his land, his horses, his  
 machines ;  
 He praised his ploughs, his cows, his  
 hogs, his dogs ;  
 He praised his hens, his geese, his  
 guinea-hens,  
 His pigeons, who in session on their  
 roofs  
 Approved him, bowing at their own  
 deserts.  
 Then from the plaintive mother's teat  
 he took  
 Her blind and shuddering puppies,  
 naming each,<sup>130</sup>  
 And naming those, his friends, for  
 whom they were ;  
 Then crost the common into Darnley  
 chase  
 To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse  
 and fern  
 Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
 Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
 He pointed out a pasturing colt, and  
 said,  
 "That was the four-year-old I sold  
 the Squire."  
 And there he told a long, long-winded  
 tale  
 Of how the Squire had seen the colt  
 at grass,  
 And how it was the thing his daugh-  
 ter wish'd,<sup>140</sup>  
 And how he sent the bailiff to the  
 farm  
 To learn the price, and what the price  
 he ask'd,  
 And how the bailiff swore that he was  
 mad,  
 But he stood firm, and so the matter  
 hung ;

He gave them line ; and five days after  
 that  
 He met the bailiff at the Golden  
 Fleece,  
 Who then and there had offer'd some-  
 thing more,  
 But he stood firm, and so the matter  
 hung ;  
 He knew the man, the colt would  
 fetch its price ;  
 He gave them line ; and how by  
 chance at last —<sup>150</sup>  
 It might be May or April, he forgot,  
 The last of April or the first of May —  
 He found the bailiff riding by the  
 farm,  
 And, talking from the point, he drew  
 him in,  
 And there he mellow'd all his heart  
 with ale,  
 Until they closed a bargain, hand in  
 hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of  
 haven, he —  
 Poor fellow, could he help it ? — re-  
 commenced,  
 And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,  
 Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tal-  
 lyho,<sup>160</sup>  
 Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the  
 Jilt,  
 Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the  
 rest,  
 Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
 And with me Philip, talking still ; and  
 so  
 We turn'd our foreheads from the fall-  
 ing sun,  
 And following our own shadows thrice  
 as long  
 As when they follow'd us from Philip's  
 door,  
 Arrived, and found the sun of sweet  
 content  
 Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things  
 well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,<sup>170</sup>  
 I slide by hazel covers ;  
 I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
 That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
 Among my skimming swallows ;  
 I make the netted sunbeam dance  
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
 In brambly wildernesses ;  
 I linger by my shingly bars, 180  
 I loiter round my cresses ;  
 And out again I curve and flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.  
 Yes, men may come and go ; and these  
 are gone,  
 All gone. My dearest brother, Ed-  
 mund, sleeps,  
 Not by the well-known stream and  
 rustic spire,  
 But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
 Of Brunelleschi, sleeps in peace ; and  
 he,  
 Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of  
 words 191  
 Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb ;  
 I scraped the lichen from it. Katie  
 walks

By the long wash of Australasian  
 seas  
 Far off, and holds her head to other  
 stars,  
 And breathes in April-autumns. All  
 are gone.  
 So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a  
 stile  
 In the long hedge, and rolling in his  
 mind  
 Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er  
 the brook  
 A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,  
 Mused, and was mute. On a sudden  
 a low breath 201  
 Of tender air made tremble in the  
 hedge  
 The fragile bindweed-bells and briony  
 rings ;  
 And he look'd up. There stood a mai-  
 den near,



' I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
 I slide by hazel covers '

Waiting to pass. In much amaze he  
 stared  
 On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when  
 the shell  
 Divides threefold to show the fruit  
 within;  
 Then, wondering, ask'd her, 'Are you  
 from the farm?'  
 'Yes,' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a  
 little; pardon me, 210  
 What do they call you?' 'Katie.'  
 'That were strange.  
 What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!'  
 'That is my name.'  
 'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-  
 perplext,  
 That Katie laugh'd, and laughing  
 blush'd, till he  
 Laugh'd also, but as one before he  
 wakes,  
 Who feels a glimmering strangeness  
 in his dream.  
 Then looking at her: 'Too happy,  
 fresh and fair,  
 Too fresh and fair in our sad world's  
 best bloom,  
 To be the ghost of one who bore your  
 name  
 About these meadows, twenty years  
 ago.' 220

'Have you not heard?' said Katie,  
 'we came back.  
 We bought the farm we tenanted be-  
 fore.  
 Am I so like her? so they said on  
 board.  
 Sir, if you knew her in her English  
 days,  
 My mother, as it seems you did, the  
 days  
 That most she loves to talk of, come  
 with me.  
 My brother James is in the harvest-  
 field;  
 But she—you will be welcome—O,  
 come in!'

### THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O LOVE, what hours were thine and  
 mine,  
 In lands of palm and southern pine;

In lands of palm, or orange-blossom,  
 Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine!

What Roman strength Turbia show'd  
 In ruin, by the mountain road;

How like a gem, beneath, the city  
 Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd!

How richly down the rocky dell  
 The torrent vineyard streaming fell 10  
 To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
 That only heaved with a summer  
 swell!

What slender campanili grew  
 By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;  
 Where, here and there, on sandy  
 beaches  
 A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew!

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,  
 Yet present in his natal grove,  
 Now watching high on mountain  
 cornice,  
 And steering, now, from a purple  
 cove, 20

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;  
 Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
 I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
 And drank, and loyally drank to him!

Nor knew we well what pleased us  
 most;  
 Not the clipt palm of which they  
 boast,  
 But distant color, happy hamlet,  
 A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
 A light amid its olives green; 30  
 Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;  
 Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
 Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;  
 And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten  
 Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,  
 Those niched shapes of noble mould,  
 A princely people's awful princes,  
 The grave, severe Genovese of old. 40

At Florence too what golden hours,  
 In those long galleries, were ours;

What drives about the fresh Cas-  
cinè,  
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers !

In bright vignettes, and each complete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,  
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet !

But when we crost the Lombard plain  
Remember what a plague of rain ; 50  
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma,  
At Lodi rain, Piacenza rain.

And stern and sad — so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight — look'd the Lombard  
piles ;  
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom,  
the glory !  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ; 61  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.  
I stood among the silent statues,  
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-  
fair,  
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there  
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd val-  
leys  
And snowy dells in a golden air !

Remember how we came at last 69  
To Como ; shower and storm and blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,  
And all was flooded ; and how we  
past

From Como, when the light was gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,  
The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of 'Lari Maxume,' all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,  
As on the Lariano crept  
To that fair port below the castle  
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake 81  
A cypress in the moonlight shake,

The moonlight touching o'er a ter-  
race  
One tall agavè above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,  
And up the snowy Splügen drew ;  
But ere we reach'd the highest sum-  
mit  
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,  
And now it tells of Italy. 90  
O love, we two shall go no longer  
To lands of summer across the sea,

So dear a life your arms enfold  
Whose crying is a cry for gold ;  
Yet here to-night in this dark city,  
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and  
dry,  
This nursling of another sky  
Still in the little book you lent me,  
And where you tenderly laid it by ; 100

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
The gloom that saddens heaven and  
earth,  
The bitter east, the misty summer  
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance to lull the throbs of pain,  
Perchance to charm a vacant brain,  
Perchance to dream you still beside  
me,  
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

Come, when no graver cares employ,  
Godfather, come and see your boy ;  
Your presence will be sun in win-  
ter,  
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few  
Who give the Fiend himself his due,  
Should eighty thousand college-  
councils

Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you,

Should all our churchmen foam in  
spite  
At you, so careful of the right, 10

Yet one lay-hearth would give you  
welcome —  
Take it and come — to the Isle of  
Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of  
town,  
I watch the twilight falling brown  
All round a careless-order'd garden  
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you  
dine,  
But honest talk and wholesome wine,  
And only hear the magpie gossip  
Garrulous under a roof of pine; 20

For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand,  
And further on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
And on thro' zones of light and  
shadow  
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
Which made a selfish war begin, 30  
Dispute the claims, arrange the  
chances, —  
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win;

Or whether war's avenging rod  
Shall lash all Europe into blood;  
Till you should turn to dearer mat-  
ters,

Dear to the man that is dear to God, —

How best to help the slender store,  
How mend the dwellings, of the poor,  
How gain in life, as life advances,  
Valor and charity more and more. 40

Come, Maurice, come; the lawn as yet  
Is hoar with rime or spongy-wet,  
But when the wreath of March has  
blossom'd, —  
Crocus, anemone, violet, —

Or later, pay one visit here,  
For those are few we hold as dear;  
Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
Many and many a happy year.  
January, 1854.

## WILL

### I

O, WELL for him whose will is strong!  
He suffers, but he will not suffer long;  
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong.  
For him nor moves the loud world's  
random mock,  
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves con-  
found,  
Who seems a promontory of rock,  
That, compass'd round with turbulent  
sound,  
In middle ocean meets the surging  
shock,  
Tempest-buffed, citadel-crown'd.

### II

But ill for him who, bettering not  
with time,  
Corrupts the strength of heaven-de-  
scended Will,  
And ever weaker grows thro' acted  
crime,  
Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
Recurring and suggesting still!  
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
And o'er a weary sultry land,  
Far beneath a blazing vault,  
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous  
hill,  
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

### I

BURY the Great Duke  
With an empire's lamentation;  
Let us bury the Great Duke  
To the noise of the mourning of a  
mighty nation;  
Mourning when their leaders fall,  
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

### II

Where shall we lay the man whom we  
deplore?  
Here, in streaming London's central  
roar.  
Let the sound of those he wrought  
for, 10  
And the feet of those he fought for,  
Echo round his bones for evermore.

## III

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,  
 As fits an universal woe,  
 Let the long, long procession go,  
 And let the sorrowing crowd about it  
     grow,  
 And let the mournful martial music  
     blow ;  
 The last great Englishman is low.

## IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
 Remembering all his greatness in the  
     past. 20  
 No more in soldier fashion will he  
     greet  
 With lifted hand the gazer in the  
     street.  
 O friends, our chief state-oracle is  
     mute !  
 Mourn for the man of long-enduring  
     blood,  
 The statesman - warrior, moderate,  
     resolute,  
 Whole in himself, a common good.  
 Mourn for the man of amplest influ-  
     ence,  
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
 Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
 Great in council and great in war, 30  
 Foremost captain of his time,  
 Rich in saving common-sense,  
 And, as the greatest only are,  
 In his simplicity sublime.  
 O good gray head which all men knew,  
 O voice from which their omens all  
     men drew,  
 O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
 O fallen at length that tower of  
     strength  
 Which stood four-square to all the  
     winds that blew !  
 Such was he whom we deplore. 40  
 The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
 The great World-victor's victor will  
     be seen no more.

## V

All is over and done.  
 Render thanks to the Giver,  
 England, for thy son.  
 Let the bell be toll'd.  
 Render thanks to the Giver,  
 And render him to the mould.  
 Under the cross of gold  
 That shines over city and river, 50

There he shall rest for ever  
 Among the wise and the bold.  
 Let the bell be toll'd,  
 And a reverent people behold  
 The towering car, the sable steeds.  
 Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,  
 Dark in its funeral fold.  
 Let the bell be toll'd,  
 And a deeper knell in the heart be  
     knoll'd ;  
 And the sound of the sorrowing anthem  
     roll'd 60  
 Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;  
 And the volleying cannon thunder his  
     loss ;  
 He knew their voices of old.  
 For many a time in many a clime  
 His captain's-car has heard them boom  
 Bellowing victory, bellowing doom.  
 When he with those deep voices  
     wrought,  
 Guarding realms and kings from  
     shame,  
 With those deep voices our dead cap-  
     tain taught  
 The tyrant, and asserts his claim 70  
 In that dread sound to the great name  
 Which he has worn so pure of blame,  
 In praise and in dispraise the same,  
 A man of well-attemper'd frame.  
 O civic muse, to such a name,  
 To such a name for ages long,  
 To such a name,  
 Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
 And ever-echoing avenues of song !

## VI

'Who is he that cometh, like an hon-  
     or'd guest, 80  
 With banner and with music, with  
     soldier and with priest,  
 With a nation weeping, and breaking  
     on my rest ?' —  
 Mighty Seaman, this is he  
 Was great by land as thou by sea.  
 Thine island loves thee well, thou  
     famous man,  
 The greatest sailor since our world  
     began.  
 Now, to the roll of muffled drums,  
 To thee the greatest soldier comes ;  
 For this is he  
 Was great by land as thou by sea. 90  
 His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;  
 O, give him welcome, this is he  
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,



And worthy to be laid by thee ;  
 For this is England's greatest son,  
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,  
 Nor ever lost an English gun ;  
 This is he that far away  
 Against the myriads of Assaye  
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won ; 100  
 And underneath another sun,  
 Warring on a later day,  
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
 The treble works, the vast designs  
 Of his labor'd rampart-lines,  
 Where he greatly stood at bay,  
 Whence he issued forth anew,  
 And ever great and greater grew,  
 Beating from the wasted vines  
 Back to France her banded swarms, 110  
 Back to France with countless blows,  
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,  
 Follow'd up in valley and glen  
 With blare of bugle, clamor of men,  
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
 And England pouring on her foes.  
 Such a war had such a close.  
 Again their ravening eagle rose  
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadow-  
     ing wings, 120  
 And barking for the thrones of kings ;  
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron  
     crown  
 On that loud Sabbath shook the spoiler  
     down ;  
 A day of onsets of despair !  
 Dash'd on every rocky square,  
 Their surging charges foam'd them-  
     selves away ;  
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;  
 Thro' the long-tormented air  
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
 And down we swept and charged and  
     overthrew. 130  
 So great a soldier taught us there  
 What long-enduring hearts could do  
 In that world-earthquake, Waterloo !  
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,  
 And pure as he from taint of craven  
     guile,  
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
 If aught of things that here befall  
 Touch a spirit among things divine,  
 If love of country move thee there at  
     all, 140  
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by  
     thine !

And thro' the centuries let a people's  
     voice  
 In full acclaim,  
 A people's voice,  
 The proof and echo of all human fame,  
 A people's voice, when they rejoice  
 At civic revel and pomp and game,  
 Attest their great commander's claim  
 With honor, honor, honor, honor to  
     him,  
 Eternal honor to his name. 150

## VII

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.  
 Tho' all men else their nobler dreams  
     forget,  
 Confused by brainless mobs and law-  
     less Powers,  
 Thank Him who isled us here, and  
     roughly set  
 His Briton in blown seas and storming  
     showers,  
 We have a voice with which to pay  
     the debt  
 Of boundless love and reverence and  
     regret  
 To those great men who fought, and  
     kept it ours.  
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute  
     control !  
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye,  
     the soul 160  
 Of Europe, keep our noble England  
     whole,  
 And save the one true seed of freedom  
     sown  
 Betwixt a people and their ancient  
     throne,  
 That sober freedom out of which there  
     springs  
 Our loyal passion for our temperate  
     kings !  
 For, saving that, ye help to save man-  
     kind  
 Till public wrong be crumbled into  
     dust,  
 And drill the raw world for the march  
     of mind,  
 Till crowds at length be sane and  
     crowns be just.  
 But wink no more in slothful over-  
     trust. 170  
 Remember him who led your hosts ;  
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts.  
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward  
     wall ;

His voice is silent in your council-hall  
 For ever ; and whatever tempests lour  
 For ever silent ; even if they broke  
 In thunder, silent ; yet remember all  
 He spoke among you, and the Man  
 who spoke ;  
 Who never sold the truth to serve the  
 hour,  
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for  
 power ; 180  
 Who let the turbid streams of rumor  
 flow  
 Thro' either babbling world of high  
 and low ;  
 Whose life was work, whose language  
 rife  
 With rugged maxims hewn from life ;  
 Who never spoke against a foe ;  
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one  
 rebuke  
 All great self-seekers trampling on the  
 right.  
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred  
 named ;  
 Truth-lover was our English Duke ;  
 Whatever record leap to light 190  
 He never shall be shamed.

## VIII

Lo ! the leader in these glorious wars  
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
 He, on whom from both her open  
 hands  
 Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,  
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her  
 horn.  
 Yea, let all good things await  
 Him who cares not to be great  
 But as he saves or serves the state. 200  
 Not once or twice in our rough island-  
 story  
 The path of duty was the way to  
 glory.  
 He that walks it, only thirsting  
 For the right, and learns to deaden  
 Love of self, before his journey closes,  
 He shall find the stubborn thistle burst-  
 ing  
 Into glossy purples, which outredden  
 All voluptuous garden-roses.  
 Not once or twice in our fair island  
 story  
 The path of duty was the way to  
 glory. 210  
 He, that ever following her commands,

On with toil of heart and knees and  
 hands,  
 Thro' the long gorge to the far light  
 has won  
 His path upward, and prevail'd,  
 Shall find the toppling crags of Duty  
 scaled  
 Are close upon the shining table-lands  
 To which our God Himself is moon  
 and sun.  
 Such was he : his work is done.  
 But while the races of mankind endure  
 Let his great example stand 220  
 Colossal, seen of every land,  
 And keep the soldier firm, the states-  
 man pure ;  
 Till in all lands and thro' all human  
 story  
 The path of duty be the way to glory.  
 And let the land whose hearths he  
 saved from shame  
 For many and many an age proclaim  
 At civic revel and pomp and game,  
 And when the long-illumined cities  
 flame,  
 Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,  
 With honor, honor, honor, honor to  
 him, 230  
 Eternal honor to his name.

## IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
 By some yet unmoulded tongue  
 Far on in summers that we shall not  
 see.  
 Peace, it is a day of pain  
 For one about whose patriarchal knee  
 Late the little children clung.  
 O peace, it is a day of pain  
 For one upon whose hand and heart  
 and brain  
 Once the weight and fate of Europe  
 hung. 240  
 Ours the pain, be his the gain !  
 More than is of man's degree  
 Must be with us, watching here  
 At this, our great solemnity.  
 Whom we see not we revere ;  
 We revere, and we refrain  
 From talk of battles loud and vain,  
 And brawling memories all too free  
 For such a wise humility  
 As befits a solemn fane : 250  
 We revere, and while we hear  
 The tides of Music's golden sea  
 Setting toward eternity,

Uplifted high in heart and hope are  
we,

Until we doubt not that for one so true  
There must be other nobler work to do  
Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
And Victor he must ever be.

For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
And break the shore, and evermore <sup>260</sup>  
Make and break, and work their will,  
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads  
roll

Round us each with different powers,  
And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the soul?  
On God and Godlike men we build our  
trust.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the  
people's ears;

The dark crowd moves, and there are  
sobs and tears;

The black earth yawns; the mortal  
disappears;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; <sup>270</sup>

He is gone who seem'd so great. —  
Gone, but nothing can bereave him  
Of the force he made his own  
Being here, and we believe him  
Something far advanced in State,  
And that he wears a truer crown  
Than any wreath that man can weave  
him.

Speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave him, <sup>280</sup>  
God accept him, Christ receive him!

1852.

### THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

#### I

HALF a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

'Forward the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns!' he said.  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

#### II

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'  
Was there a man dismay'd?

Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd.  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die.  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

#### III

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of hell  
Rode the six hundred.

#### IV

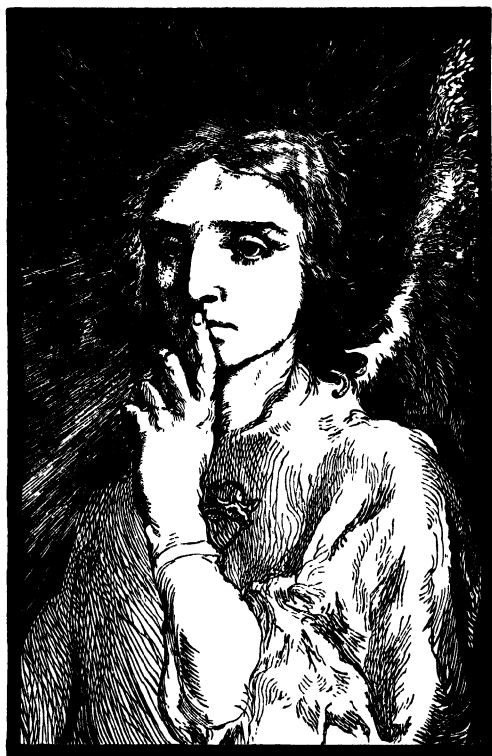
Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wonder'd.  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro' the line they broke;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back, but not,  
Not the six hundred.

#### V

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
Back from the mouth of hell,  
All that was left of them,  
Left of six hundred.

#### VI

When can their glory fade?  
O the wild charge they made!  
All the world wonder'd.  
Honor the charge they made!  
Honor the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred!



' Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,  
" Not to tell her, never to let her know "'

## ENOCH ARDEN AND OTHER POEMS

### ENOCH ARDEN

Long lines of cliff breaking have  
left a chasm ;  
And in the chasm are foam and yellow  
sands ;  
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow  
wharf  
In cluster ; then a moulder'd church ;  
and higher  
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd  
mill ;

And high in heaven behind it a gray  
down  
With Danish barrows ; and a hazel-  
wood,  
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes  
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.  
Here on this beach a hundred years  
ago,  
Three children of three houses, Annie<sup>10</sup>  
Lee,  
The prettiest little damsel in the port,  
And Philip Ray, the miller's only son,

And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad  
 Made orphan by a winter shipwreck,  
 play'd  
 Among the waste and lumber of the  
 shore,  
 Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fish-  
 ing-nets,  
 Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats up-  
 drawn;  
 And built their castles of dissolving  
 sand  
 To watch them overflow'd, or follow-  
 ing up  
 And flying the white breaker, daily  
 left  
 The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the  
 cliff;  
 In this the children play'd at keeping  
 house.  
 Enoch was host one day, Philip the  
 next,  
 While Annie still was mistress; but  
 at times  
 Enoch would hold possession for a  
 week;  
 'This is my house and this my little  
 wife.'  
 'Mine too,' said Philip; 'turn and  
 turn about;'  
 When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch  
 stronger-made  
 Was master. Then would Philip, his  
 blue eyes  
 All flooded with the helpless wrath of  
 tears,  
 Shriek out, 'I hate you, Enoch,' and  
 at this  
 The little wife would weep for com-  
 pany,  
 And pray them not to quarrel for her  
 sake,  
 And say she would be little wife to  
 both.

But when the dawn of rosy child-  
 hood past,  
 And the new warmth of life's ascend-  
 ing sun  
 Was felt by either, either fixt his heart  
 On that one girl; and Enoch spoke  
 his love,  
 But Philip loved in silence; and the  
 girl  
 Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;

But she loved Enoch, tho' she knew  
 it not,  
 And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set  
 A purpose evermore before his eyes,  
 To hoard all savings to the uttermost,  
 To purchase his own boat, and make  
 a home  
 For Annie; and so prosper'd that at last  
 A luckier or a bolder fisherman,  
 A carefuller in peril, did not breathe  
 For leagues along that breaker-beaten  
 coast  
 Than Enoch. Likewise had he served  
 a year  
 On board a merchantman, and made  
 himself  
 Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd  
 a life  
 From the dread sweep of the down-  
 streaming seas,  
 And all men look'd upon him favor-  
 ably.  
 And ere he touch'd his one-and-twen-  
 tieth May  
 He purchased his own boat, and made  
 a home  
 For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway  
 up  
 The narrow street that clamber'd to-  
 ward the mill.

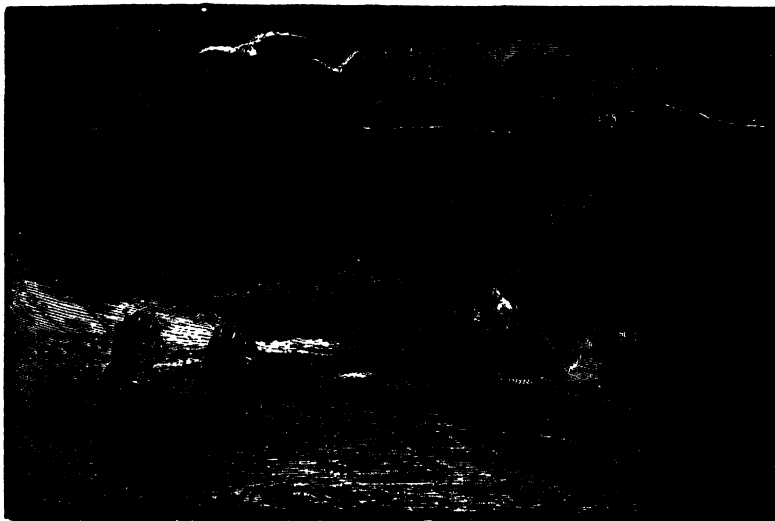
Then, on a golden autumn eventide,  
 The younger people making holiday,  
 With bag and sack and basket, great  
 and small,  
 Went nutting to the hazels. Philip  
 stay'd—  
 His father lying sick and needing  
 him—  
 An hour behind; but as he climb'd  
 the hill,  
 Just where the prone edge of the  
 wood began  
 To feather toward the hollow, saw  
 the pair,  
 Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-  
 hand,  
 His large gray eyes and weather-beaten  
 face  
 All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,  
 That burn'd as on an altar. Philip  
 look'd,  
 And in their eyes and faces read his  
 doom;  
 Then, as their faces drew together,  
 groan'd,

And slipt aside, and like a wounded  
life  
Crept down into the hollows of the  
wood;  
There, while the rest were loud in  
merry-making,  
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose  
and past  
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang  
the bells, 80  
And merrily ran the years, seven  
happy years,  
Seven happy years of health and com-  
petence,  
And mutual love and honorable toil,  
With children, first a daughter. In  
him woke,  
With his first babe's first cry, the  
noble wish  
To save all earnings to the uttermost,  
And give his child a better bringing-up  
Than his had been, or hers; a wish re-  
new'd,  
When two years after came a boy to be  
The rosy idol of her solitudes, 90  
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful  
seas,

Or often journeying landward; for in  
truth  
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's  
ocean-spoil  
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,  
Rough-redden'd with a thousand win-  
ter gales,  
Not only to the market-cross were  
known,  
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,  
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp  
And peacock yew-tree of the lonely  
Hall,  
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's minis-  
tering. 100

Then came a change, as all things  
human change.  
Ten miles to northward of the narrow  
port  
Open'd a larger haven. Thither used  
Enoch at times to go by land or  
sea;  
And once when there, and clambering  
on a mast  
In harbor, by mischance he slipt and  
fell.  
A limb was broken when they lifted  
him;



'He thrice had pluck'd a life  
From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas'

And while he lay recovering there, his wife  
 Bore him another son, a sickly one.  
 Another hand crept too across his trade  
 Taking her bread and theirs; and on him fell,  
 Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,  
 Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.  
 He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,  
 To see his children leading evermore  
 Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,  
 And her he loved a beggar. Then he pray'd,  
 'Save them from this, whatever comes to me.'  
 And while he pray'd, the master of that ship  
 Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,  
 Came, for he knew the man and valued him,  
 Reporting of his vessel China-bound,  
 And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?  
 There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,  
 Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place?  
 And Enoch all at once assented to it,  
 Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd  
 No graver than as when some little cloud  
 Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,  
 And isles a light in the offing. Yet the wife—  
 When he was gone—the children—what to do?  
 Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans:  
 To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—  
 How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her!  
 He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse—  
 And yet to sell her—then with what she brought  
 Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade

With all that seamen needed or their wives—  
 So might she keep the house while he was gone.  
 Should he not trade himself out yonder? go  
 This voyage more than once? yea, twice or thrice—  
 As oft as needed—last, returning rich,  
 Become the master of a larger craft,  
 With fuller profits lead an easier life,  
 Have all his pretty young ones educated,  
 And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all;  
 Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,  
 Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.  
 Forward she started with a happy cry,  
 And laid the feeble infant in his arms;  
 Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,  
 Appraised his weight and fondled fatherlike,  
 But had no heart to break his purposes  
 To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt  
 Her finger, Annie fought against his will;  
 Yet not with brawling opposition she,  
 But manifold entreaties, many a tear,  
 Many a sad kiss by day, by night, renew'd—  
 Sure that all evil would come out of it—  
 Besought him, supplicating, if he cared  
 For her or his dear children, not to go.  
 He not for his own self caring, but her,  
 Her and her children, let her plead in vain;  
 So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,  
 Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand  
 To fit their little streetward sitting-room



'Forward she started with a happy cry,  
And laid the feeble infant in his arms'

With shelf and corner for the goods  
and stores.  
So all day long till Enoch's last at  
home,  
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer  
and axe,  
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to  
hear  
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd  
and rang,  
Till this was ended, and his careful  
hand, —  
The space was narrow, — having  
order'd all  
Almost as neat and close as Nature  
packs

Her blossom or her seedling, paused,  
and he,  
Who needs would work for Annie to  
the last,  
Ascending tired, heavily slept till  
morn. 180

And Enoch faced this morning of  
farewell  
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's  
fears,  
Save as his Annie's, were a laughter to  
him.  
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man  
Bow'd himself down, and in that mys-  
tery



Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,  
 Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes,  
 Whatever came to him; and then he said:  
 'Annie, this voyage by the grace of God<sup>190</sup>  
 Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.  
 Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,  
 For I'll be back, my girl, before you know it;'  
 Then lightly rocking baby's cradle,  
 'and he,  
 This pretty, puny, weakly little one, —  
 Nay — for I love him all the better for it —  
 God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees  
 And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,  
 And make him merry, when I come home again.  
 Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go.'<sup>200</sup>

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,  
 And almost hoped herself; but when he turn'd  
 The current of his talk to graver things  
 In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing  
 On providence and trust in heaven, she heard,  
 Heard and not heard him; as the village girl,  
 Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,  
 Musing on him that used to fill it for her,  
 Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke: 'O Enoch, you are wise;<sup>210</sup>  
 And yet for all your wisdom well know I  
 That I shall look upon your face no more.'

'Well, then,' said Enoch, 'I shall look on yours.  
 Annie, the ship I sail in passes here' —

He named the day; — 'get you a sea-man's glass,  
 Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears.'

But when the last of those last moments came.  
 'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,  
 Look to the babes, and till I come again  
 Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.<sup>220</sup>  
 And fear no more for me; or if you fear,  
 Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.  
 Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
 Parts of the morning? if I flee to these,  
 Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,  
 The sea is His; He made it.'

Enoch rose,  
 Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,  
 And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;  
 But for the third, the sickly one, who slept  
 After a night of feverous wakefulness,  
 When Annie would have raised him  
 Enoch said,<sup>231</sup>  
 'Wake him not, let him sleep; how should the child  
 Remember this?' and kiss'd him in his cot.  
 But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt  
 A tiny curl, and gave it; this he kept  
 Thro' all his future, but now hastily caught  
 His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She, when the day that Enoch mention'd came,  
 Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain. Perhaps  
 She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;<sup>240</sup>  
 Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;  
 She saw him not, and while he stood on deck  
 Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Even to the last dip of the vanishing sail  
 She watch'd it, and departed weeping  
 for him ;  
 Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as  
 his grave,  
 Set her sad will no less to chime with  
 his,  
 But throve not in her trade, not being  
 bred  
 To barter, nor compensating the want  
 By shrewdness, neither capable of  
 lies, <sup>250</sup>  
 Nor asking overmuch and taking less,  
 And still foreboding 'what would  
 Enoch say ?'  
 For more than once, in days of difficulty  
 And pressure, had she sold her wares  
 for less  
 Than what she gave in buying what  
 she sold.  
 She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it ;  
 and thus,  
 Expectant of that news which never  
 came,  
 Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,  
 And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born  
 and grew <sup>260</sup>  
 Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it  
 With all a mother's care ; nevertheless,  
 Whether her business often call'd her  
 from it,  
 Or thro' the want of what it needed  
 most,  
 Or means to pay the voice who best  
 could tell  
 What most it needed — howsoe'er it  
 was,  
 After a lingering, — ere she was  
 aware, —  
 Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,  
 The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie  
 buried it, <sup>270</sup>  
 Philip's true heart, which hunger'd  
 for her peace, —  
 Since Enoch left he had not look'd  
 upon her, —  
 Smote him, as having kept aloof so  
 long.

'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see her  
 now,  
 May be some little comfort ;' there-  
 fore went,  
 Past thro' the solitary room in front,  
 Paused for a moment at an inner door,  
 Then struck it thrice, and, no one  
 opening,  
 Enter'd, but Annie, seated with her  
 grief,  
 Fresh from the burial of her little  
 one, <sup>280</sup>  
 Cared not to look on any human face,  
 But turn'd her own toward the wall  
 and wept.  
 Then Philip standing up said falter-  
 ingly,  
 'Annie, I came to ask a favor of you.'

He spoke ; the passion in her moan'd  
 reply,  
 'Favor from one so sad and so forlorn  
 As I am !' half abash'd him ; yet un-  
 ask'd,  
 His bashfulness and tenderness at war,  
 He set himself beside her, saying to  
 her :

'I came to speak to you of what he  
 wish'd, <sup>290</sup>  
 Enoch, your husband. I have ever  
 said  
 You chose the best among us — a  
 strong man ;  
 For where he fixt his heart he set his  
 hand  
 To do the thing he will'd, and bore it  
 thro'.  
 And wherefore did he go this weary  
 way,  
 And leave you lonely ? not to see the  
 world —  
 For pleasure ? — nay, but for the  
 wherewithal  
 To give his babes a better bringing up  
 Than his had been, or yours ; that was  
 his wish.  
 And if he come again, vext will he be  
 To find the precious morning hours  
 were lost. <sup>301</sup>  
 And it would vex him even in his  
 grave,  
 If he could know his babes were run-  
 ning wild  
 Like colts about the waste. So, Annie,  
 now —

Have we not known each other all our  
lives ?  
I do beseech you by the love you  
bear  
Him and his children not to say me  
nay —  
For, if you will, when Enoch comes  
again  
Why then he shall repay me — if you  
will,  
Annie — for I am rich and well-to-do.  
Now let me put the boy and girl to  
school ;  
This is the favor that I came to ask.’<sup>311</sup>

Then Annie with her brows against  
the wall  
Answer’d, ‘I cannot look you in the  
face ;  
I seem so foolish and so broken down.  
When you came in my sorrow broke  
me down ;  
And now I think your kindness breaks  
me down.  
But Enoch lives ; that is borne in on  
me ;  
He will repay you. Money can be  
repaid,  
Not kindness such as yours.’<sup>319</sup>

And Philip ask’d,  
‘Then you will let me, Annie?’

There she turn’d,  
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes  
upon him,  
And dwelt a moment on his kindly  
face,  
Then calling down a blessing on his  
head  
Caught at his hand, and wrung it pas-  
sionately.  
And past into the little garth beyond.  
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl  
to school,  
And bought them needful books, and  
every way,  
Like one who does his duty by his  
own,  
Made himself theirs ; and tho’ for  
Annie’s sake,<sup>330</sup>  
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,  
He oft denied his heart his dearest  
wish,

And seldom crost her threshold, yet  
he sent  
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs  
and fruit,  
The late and early roses from his wall,  
Or conies from the down, and now  
and then,  
With some pretext of fineness in the  
meal  
To save the offence of charitable,  
flour  
From his tall mill that whistled on  
the waste.<sup>340</sup>

But Philip did not fathom Annie’s  
mind ;  
Scarce could the woman, when he  
came upon her,  
Out of full heart and boundless grati-  
tude  
Light on a broken word to thank him  
with.  
But Philip was her children’s all-in-all ;  
From distant corners of the street they  
ran  
To greet his hearty welcome heartily ;  
Lords of his house and of his mill  
were they,  
Worried his passive ear with petty  
wrongs  
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play’d  
with him<sup>350</sup>  
And call’d him Father Philip. Philip  
gain’d  
As Enoch lost, for Enoch seem’d to  
them  
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,  
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn  
Down at the far end of an avenue,  
Going we know not where ; and so  
ten years,  
Since Enoch left his hearth and native  
land,  
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch  
came.

It chanced one evening Annie’s  
children long’d  
To go with others nutting to the  
wood,<sup>360</sup>  
And Annie would go with them ;  
then they begg’d  
For Father Philip, as they call’d him,  
too.  
Him, like the working bee in blossom-  
dust.



'Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,  
And bought them needful books'

Blanch'd with his mill, they found ;  
and saying to him,  
Come with us, Father Philip,' he  
denied ;  
But when the children pluck'd at him  
to go,  
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to  
their wish,  
For was not Annie with them ? and  
they went.

But after scaling half the weary  
down,  
Just where the prone edge of the  
wood began

To feather toward the hollow, all her  
force  
Fail'd her ; and sighing, 'Let me rest,  
she said.  
So Philip rested with her well-content  
While all the younger ones with jubi-  
lant cries  
Broke from their elders, and tumultu-  
ously  
Down thro' the whitening hazels made  
a plunge  
To the bottom, and dispersed, and  
bent or broke  
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear  
away

Their tawny clusters, crying to each  
other  
And calling, here and there, about  
the wood. 380

But Philip sitting at her side forgot  
Her presence, and remember'd one  
dark hour  
Here in this wood, when like a  
wounded life  
He crept into the shadow. At last he  
said,  
Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen,  
Annie,  
How merry they are down yonder in  
the wood.  
Tired, Annie?' for she did not speak  
a word.  
'Tired?' but her face had fallen upon  
her hands;  
At which, as with a kind of anger in  
him,  
'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the ship  
was lost! 390  
No more of that! why should you kill  
yourself  
And make them orphans quite?'  
And Annie said,  
'I thought not of it; but—I know  
not why—  
Their voices make me feel so solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat closer  
spoke:  
'Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,  
And it has been upon my mind so long  
That, tho' I know not when it first  
came there,  
I know that it will out at last.  
O Annie,  
It is beyond all hope, against all  
chance, 400  
That he who left you ten long years  
ago  
Should still be living; well, then—let  
me speak.  
I grieve to see you poor and wanting  
help;  
I cannot help you as I wish to do  
Unless—they say that women are so  
quick—  
Perhaps you know what I would have  
you know—  
I wish you for my wife. I fain would  
prove  
A father to your children; I do think

They love me as a father; I am sure  
That I love them as if they were mine  
own; 410  
And I believe, if you were fast my  
wife,  
That after all these sad uncertain years  
We might be still as happy as God  
grants  
To any of his creatures. Think upon  
it;  
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,  
No burthen, save my care for you and  
yours,  
And we have known each other all our  
lives,  
And I have loved you longer than you  
know.'

Then answer'd Annie—tenderly she  
spoke:  
'You have been as God's good angel  
in our house. 420  
God bless you for it, God reward you  
for it,  
Philip, with something happier than  
myself.  
Can one love twice? can you be ever  
loved  
As Enoch was? what is it that you  
ask?'  
'I am content,' he answer'd, 'to be  
loved  
A little after Enoch.' 'O,' she cried,  
Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a  
while.  
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not  
come—  
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long.  
Surely I shall be wiser in a year. 430  
O, wait a little!' Philip sadly said,  
'Annie, as I have waited all my life  
I well may wait a little.' 'Nay,' she  
cried,  
'I am bound: you have my promise  
—in a year.  
Will you not bide your year as I bide  
mine?'  
And Philip answer'd, 'I will bide my  
year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip  
glancing up  
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen  
day  
Pass from the Danish barrow over-  
head;

Then, fearing night and chill for Annie,  
 rose  
 And sent his voice beneath him thro' <sup>440</sup>  
 the wood.  
 Up came the children laden with their  
 spoil;  
 Then all descended to the port, and  
 there  
 At Annie's door he paused and gave  
 his hand,  
 Saying gently, 'Annie, when I spoke  
 to you,  
 That was your hour of weakness. I  
 was wrong,  
 I am always bound to you, but you  
 are free.'  
 Then Annie weeping answer'd, 'I am  
 bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment as it  
 were,  
 While yet she went about her house-  
 hold ways, 450

Even as she dwelt upon his latest  
 words,  
 That he had loved her longer than she  
 knew,  
 That autumn into autumn flash'd  
 again,  
 And there he stood once more before  
 her face,  
 Claiming her promise. 'Is it a year?'  
 she ask'd.  
 'Yes, if the nuts,' he said, 'be ripe  
 again;  
 Come out and see.' But she — she put  
 him off —  
 So much to look to — such a change —  
 a month —  
 Give her a month — she knew that she  
 was bound —  
 A month — no more. Then Philip with  
 his eyes <sup>460</sup>  
 Full of that lifelong hunger, and his  
 voice  
 Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,



LF  
 Nov. 1864

'Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke:  
 "Annie, there is a thing upon my mind"'

'Take your own time, Annie, take  
your own time.'  
And Annie could have wept for pity  
of him;  
And yet she held him on delayingly  
With many a scarce-believable excuse,  
Trying his truth and his long-suffer-  
ance,  
Till half another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,  
Abhorrent of a calculation crost, <sup>470</sup>  
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.  
Some thought that Philip did but trifle  
with her;  
Some that she but held off to draw him  
on;  
And others laugh'd at her and Philip  
too,  
As simple folk that knew not their  
own minds;  
And one, in whom all evil fancies clung  
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly  
Would hint at worse in either. Her  
own son  
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his  
wish;  
But evermore the daughter prest upon  
her <sup>480</sup>  
To wed the man so dear to all of them  
And lift the household out of poverty;  
And Philip's rosy face contracting  
grew  
Careworn and wan; and all these  
things fell on her  
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced  
That Annie could not sleep, but ear-  
nestly  
Pray'd for a sign, 'My Enoch, is he  
gone?'  
Then compass'd round by the blind  
wall of night  
Brook'd not the expectant terror of her  
heart,  
Started from bed, and struck herself  
a light, <sup>490</sup>  
Then desperately seized the holy Book,  
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
Suddenly put her finger on the text,  
'Under the palm-tree.' That was no-  
thing to her,  
No meaning there; she closed the Book  
and slept.  
When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,

Under a palm-tree, over him the sun.  
'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy.  
he is singing  
Hosanna in the highest; yonder shines  
The Sun of Righteousness, and these  
be palms <sup>500</sup>  
Whereof the happy people strowing  
cried  
'Hosanna in the highest!'" Here she  
woke,  
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly  
to him,  
'There is no reason why we should  
not wed.'  
'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd,  
'both our sakes,  
So you will wed me, let it be at once.'

So these were wed, and merrily rang  
the bells,  
Merrily rang the bells, and they were  
wed.  
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.  
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her  
path, <sup>510</sup>  
She knew not whence; a whisper on  
her ear,  
She knew not what; nor loved she to  
be left  
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.  
What ail'd her then that, ere she  
enter'd, often  
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the  
latch,  
Fearing to enter? Philip thought he  
knew:  
Such doubts and fears were common  
to her state,  
Being with child; but when her child  
was born,  
Then her new child was as herself re-  
new'd,  
Then the new mother came about her  
heart, <sup>520</sup>  
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,  
And that mysterious instinct wholly  
died.

And where was Enoch? Prosper-  
ously sail'd  
The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at set-  
ting forth  
The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,  
shook  
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet un-  
vext

She slipt across the summer of the  
world,  
Then after a long tumble about the  
Cape  
And frequent interchange of foul and  
fair,  
She passing thro' the summer world  
again,  
The breath of heaven came continually<sup>530</sup>  
And sent her sweetly by the golden  
isles,  
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and  
bought  
Quaint monsters for the market of  
those times,  
A gilded dragon also for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at  
first indeed  
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by  
day,  
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-  
head  
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from  
her bows:  
Then follow'd calms, and then winds<sup>540</sup>  
variable,  
Then baffling, a long course of them;  
and last  
Storm, such as drove her under moon-  
less heavens  
Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers'  
came  
The crash of ruin, and the loss of  
all  
But Enoch and two others. Half the  
night,  
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken  
spars,  
These drifted, stranding on an isle at  
morn  
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human suste-  
nance,  
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nour-<sup>550</sup>  
ishing roots;  
Nor save for pity was it hard to take  
The helpless life so wild that it was  
tame.  
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-  
gorge  
They built, and thatch'd with leaves  
of palm, a hut,

Half hut, half native cavern. So the  
three,  
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,  
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-con-  
tent.  
For one, the youngest, hardly more  
than boy,  
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin  
and wreck,  
Lay lingering out a five-years' death<sup>560</sup>  
in-life.  
They could not leave him. After he  
was gone,  
The two remaining found a fallen  
stem;  
And Enoch's comrade, careless of  
himself,  
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion,  
fell  
Sun-stricken, and that other lived  
alone.  
In those two deaths he read God's  
warning 'wait'

The mountain wooded to the peak,  
the lawns  
And winding glades high up like  
ways to heaven,  
The slender coco's drooping crown of  
plumes,  
The lightning flash of insect and of<sup>570</sup>  
bird,  
The lustre of the long convolvuluses  
That coil'd around the stately stems,  
and ran  
Even to the limit of the land, the glows  
And glories of the broad belt of the  
world,—  
All these he saw; but what he fain  
had seen  
He could not see, the kindly human  
face,  
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but  
heard  
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean  
fowl,  
The league-long roller thundering on<sup>580</sup>  
the reef,  
The moving whisper of huge trees  
that branch'd  
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the  
sweep  
Of some precipitous rivulet to the  
wave,  
As down the shore he ranged, or al-  
day long





‘A shipwreck’d sailor, waiting for a sail’

Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,  
 A shipwreck’d sailor, waiting for a  
 sail.  
 No sail from day to day, but every  
 day  
 The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts  
 Among the palms and ferns and pre-  
 cipices;  
 The blaze upon the waters to the  
 east;  
 The blaze upon his island overhead;  
 The blaze upon the waters to the west;  
 Then the great stars that globed them-  
 selves in heaven,  
 The hollow-bellowing ocean, and  
 again  
 The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no  
 sail.

There often as he watch’d or seem’d  
 to watch,  
 So still the golden lizard on him  
 paused,  
 A phantom made of many phantoms  
 moved  
 Before him haunting him, or he him  
 self  
 Moved haunting people, things, and  
 places, known  
 Far in a darker isle beyond the  
 line;  
 The babes, their babble, Annie, the  
 small house,  
 The climbing street, the mill, the leafy  
 lanes,  
 The peacock yew-tree and the lonely  
 Hall,

The horse he drove, the boat he sold,  
the chill  
November dawns and dewy-glooming  
downs,  
The gentle shower, the smell of dying  
leaves,  
And the low moan of leaden-color'd  
seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his  
cars,  
Tho' faintly, merrily — far and far  
away — <sup>610</sup>  
He heard the pealing of his parish  
bells;  
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore,  
started up  
Shuddering, and when the beauteous  
hateful isle  
Return'd upon him, had not his poor  
heart  
Spoken with That which being every-  
where  
Lets none who speaks with Him seem  
all alone,  
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering  
head  
The sunny and rainy seasons came  
and went  
Year after year. His hopes to see his  
own, <sup>620</sup>  
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,  
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely  
doom  
Came suddenly to an end. Another  
ship —  
She wanted water — blown by baffling  
winds,  
Like the 'Good Fortune,' from her  
destined course,  
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where  
she lay;  
For since the mate had seen at early  
dawn  
Across a break on the mist-wreathen  
isle  
The silent water slipping from the  
hills,  
They sent a crew that landing burst  
away <sup>630</sup>  
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd  
the shores  
With clamor. Downward from his  
mountain gorge

Stept the long-hair'd, long-bearded  
solitary,  
Brown, looking hardly human,  
strangely clad,  
Muttering and mumbling, idiot-like  
it seem'd,  
With inarticulate rage, and making  
signs  
They knew not what; and yet he led  
the way  
To where the rivulets of sweet water  
ran,  
And ever as he mingled with the crew,  
And heard them talking, his long-  
bounden tongue <sup>640</sup>  
Was loosen'd, till he made them un-  
derstand;  
Whom, when their casks were fill'd,  
they took aboard.  
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,  
Scarce-credited at first but more and  
more,  
Amazed and melted all who listen'd  
to it;  
And clothes they gave him and free  
passage home,  
But oft he work'd among the rest and  
shook  
His isolation from him. None of these  
Came from his country, or could an-  
swer him,  
If question'd, aught of what he cared  
to know. <sup>650</sup>  
And dull the voyage was with long  
delays,  
The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but  
evermore  
His fancy fled before the lazy wind  
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon  
He like a lover down thro' all his blood  
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-  
breath  
Of England, blown across her ghostly  
wall.  
And that same morning officers and  
men  
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,  
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him  
it; <sup>660</sup>  
Then moving up the coast they landed  
him,  
Even in that harbor whence he sail'd  
before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any  
one,

But homeward — home — what home?  
had he a home? —

His home, he walk'd. Bright was  
that afternoon,

Sunny but chill; till drawn thro'  
either chasm,

Where either haven open'd on the  
deeps,

Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the  
world in gray,

Cut off the length of highway on be-  
fore,

And left but narrow breadth to left  
and right <sup>670</sup>

Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.  
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped

Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping  
haze

The dead weight of the dead leaf bore  
it down.

Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the  
gloom;

Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted  
light

Flared on him, and he came upon the  
place.

Then down the long street having  
slowly stolen,

His heart foreshadowing all calamity,  
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd

the home <sup>680</sup>  
Where Annie lived and loved him,

and his babes  
In those far-off seven happy years

were born;  
But finding neither light nor murmur  
there —

A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the driz-  
zle — crept

Still downward thinking, 'dead or  
dead to me!'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf  
he went,

Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,  
A front of timber-crost antiquity,

So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,  
He thought it must have gone; but

he was gone <sup>690</sup>  
Who kept it, and his widow Miriam

Lane,  
With daily-dwindling profits held the  
house;

A haunt of brawling seamen once, but  
now

Still, with yet a bed for wandering  
men.

There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and gar-  
rulous,

Nor let him be, but often breaking  
in,

Told him, with other annals of the port,  
Not knowing — Enoch was so brown,

so bow'd,  
So broken — all the story of his house:

His baby's death, her growing pov-  
erty, <sup>701</sup>

How Philip put her little ones to  
school,

And kept them in it, his long wooing  
her,

Her slow consent and marriage, and  
the birth

Of Philip's child; and o'er his counte-  
nance

No shadow past, nor motion. Any one,  
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt

the tale  
Less than the teller; only when she

closed,  
'Enoch, poor man, was cast away and

lost,'  
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,

Repeated muttering, 'cast away and  
lost;' <sup>711</sup>

Again in deeper inward whispers,  
'lost!'

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face  
again:

'If I might look on her sweet face  
again,

And know that she is happy.' So the  
thought

Haunted and harass'd him, and drove  
him forth,

At evening when the dull November  
day

Was growing duller twilight, to the  
hill.

There he sat down gazing on all below;  
There did a thousand memories roll

upon him, <sup>720</sup>  
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by

The ruddy square of comfortable light,  
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's

house,  
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze al-  
lures

The bird of passage, till he madly  
strikes  
Against it and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the  
street,  
The latest house to landward ; but be-  
hind,  
With one small gate that open'd on  
the waste,  
Flourish'd a little garden square and  
wall'd,  
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,<sup>730</sup>  
A yew-tree, and all round it ran a  
walk  
Of shingle, and a walk divided it.  
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk  
and stole  
Up by the wall, behind the yew ; and  
thence  
That which he better might have  
shunn'd, if griefs  
Like his have worse or better, Enoch  
saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd  
board  
Sparkled and shone ; so genial was the  
hearth ;  
And on the right hand of the hearth  
he saw<sup>740</sup>  
Philip, the slighted suitor of old  
times,  
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his  
knees ;  
And o'er her second father stoopt a  
girl,  
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,  
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her  
lifted hand  
Dangled a length of ribbon and a  
ring  
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his  
creasy arms,  
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they  
laugh'd ;  
And on the left hand of the hearth he  
saw<sup>750</sup>  
The mother glancing often toward her  
babe,  
But turning now and then to speak  
with him,  
Her son, who stood beside her tall and  
strong,  
And saying that which pleased him,  
for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to  
life beheld  
His wife his wife no more, and saw  
the babe  
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's  
knee,  
And all the warmth, the peace, the  
happiness,  
And his own children tall and beauti-  
ful,  
And him, that other, reigning in his  
place,  
Lord of his rights and of his children's  
love—<sup>760</sup>  
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told  
him all,  
Because things seen are mightier than  
things heard,  
Stagger'd and shook, holding the  
branch, and fear'd  
To send abroad a shrill and terrible  
cry,  
Which in one moment, like the blast  
of doom,  
Would shatter all the happiness of the  
hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a  
thief,  
Lest the harsh shingle should grate  
underfoot,  
And feeling all along the garden-  
wall,  
Lest he should swoon and tumble and  
be found,<sup>770</sup>  
Crept to the gate, and open'd it and  
closed,  
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-  
door,  
Behind him, and came out upon the  
waste.

And there he would have knelt, but  
that his knees  
Were feeble, so that falling prone he  
dug  
His fingers into the wet earth, and  
pray'd :

'Too hard to bear ! why did they  
take me thence ?  
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour.  
Thou  
That didst uphold me on my lonely  
isle,  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness

A little longer! aid me, give me  
 strength <sup>781</sup>  
 Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
 Help me not to break in upon her  
 peace.  
 My children too! must I not speak to  
 these?  
 They know me not. I should betray  
 myself.  
 Never! no father's kiss for me—the  
 girl  
 So like her mother, and the boy, my  
 son.'

There speech and thought and na-  
 ture fail'd a little,  
 And he lay tranced; but when he rose  
 and paced  
 Back toward his solitary home again,  
 All down the long and narrow street  
 he went <sup>791</sup>  
 Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
 As tho' it were the burthen of a song,  
 'Not to tell her, never to let her  
 know.'

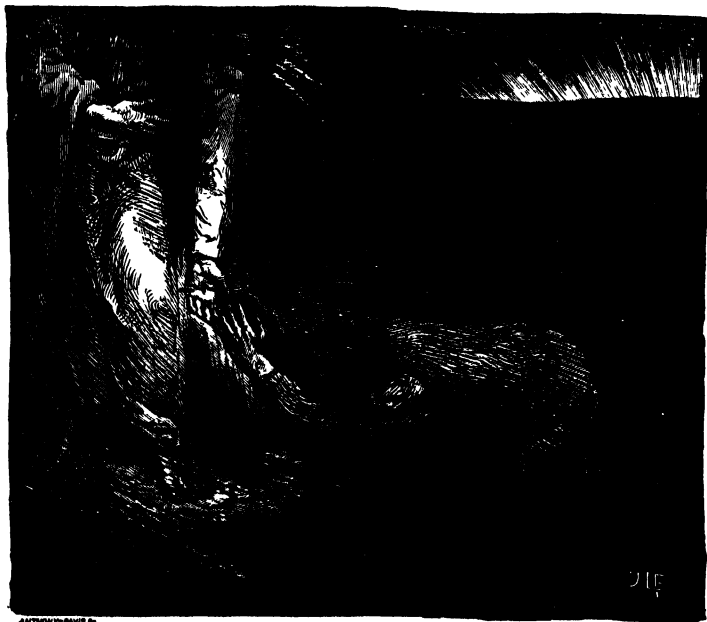
He was not all unhappy. His re-  
 solve  
 Upbore him, and firm faith, and ever-  
 more  
 Prayer from a living source within the  
 will,  
 And beating up thro' all the bitter  
 world,  
 Like fountains of sweet water in the  
 sea,  
 Kept him a living soul. 'This miller's  
 wife,' <sup>800</sup>  
 He said to Miriam, 'that you spoke  
 about,  
 Has she no fear that her first husband  
 lives?'  
 'Ay, ay, poor soul,' said Miriam, 'fear  
 enow!  
 If you could tell her you had seen him  
 dead,  
 Why, that would be her comfort;' and  
 he thought,  
 'After the Lord has call'd me she shall  
 know,  
 I wait His time;' and Enoch set him-  
 self,  
 Scorning an alms, to work whereby to  
 live.  
 Almost to all things could he turn his  
 hand.

Cooper he was and carpenter, and  
 wrought <sup>810</sup>  
 To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or  
 help'd  
 At lading and unlading the tall barks  
 That brought the stinted commerce of  
 those days,  
 Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself.  
 Yet since he did but labor for himself,  
 Work without hope, there was not life  
 in it  
 Whereby the man could live; and as  
 the year  
 Roll'd itself round again to meet the  
 day  
 When Enoch had return'd, a languor  
 came  
 Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually  
 Weakening the man, till he could do  
 no more, <sup>821</sup>  
 But kept the house, his chair, and last  
 his bed.  
 And Enoch bore his weakness cheer-  
 fully.  
 For sure no gladlier does the stranded  
 wreck  
 See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting  
 squall  
 The boat that bears the hope of life  
 approach  
 To save the life despair'd of, than he  
 saw  
 Death dawning on him, and the close  
 of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a  
 kindlier hope  
 On Enoch thinking, 'after I am gone,  
 Then may she learn I loved her to the  
 last,' <sup>831</sup>  
 He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and  
 said:  
 'Woman, I have a secret—only swear,  
 Before I tell you—swear upon the  
 book  
 Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'  
 'Dead,' clamor'd the good woman,  
 'hear him talk!  
 I warrant, man, that we shall bring  
 you round.'  
 'Swear,' added Enoch sternly, 'on  
 the book;  
 And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam  
 swore.  
 Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes  
 upon her, <sup>840</sup>

'Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?'  
 'Know him?' she said, 'I knew him far away.  
 Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;  
 Held his head high, and cared for no man, he.'  
 Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her:  
 'His head is low, and no man cares for him.  
 I think I have not three days more to live;  
 I am the man.' At which the woman gave  
 A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry:  
 'You Arden, you! nay, — sure he was a foot <sup>850</sup>  
 Higher than you be.' Enoch said again:  
 'My God has bow'd me down to what I am;

My grief and solitude have broken me;  
 Nevertheless, know you that I am he  
 Who married — but that name has twice been changed —  
 I married her who married Philip Ray.  
 Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voyage,  
 His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,  
 His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,  
 And how he kept it. As the woman heard, <sup>860</sup>  
 Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,  
 While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly  
 To rush abroad all round the little haven,  
 Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;  
 But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,



'Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
 A little longer! aid me, give me strength'

Saying only, 'See your bairns before  
 you go!  
 Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and  
 arose  
 Eager to bring them down, for Enoch  
 hung  
 A moment on her words, but then re-  
 plied:

'Woman, disturb me not now at  
 the last, 870  
 But let me hold my purpose till I  
 die.  
 Sit down again; mark me and under-  
 stand,  
 While I have power to speak. I  
 charge you now,  
 When you shall see her, tell her that I  
 died  
 Blessing her, praying for her, loving  
 her;  
 Save for the bar between us, loving  
 her  
 As when she laid her head beside my  
 own.  
 And tell my daughter Annie, whom I  
 saw  
 So like her mother, that my latest  
 breath  
 Was spent in blessing her and pray-  
 ing for her. 880  
 And tell my son that I died blessing  
 him.  
 And say to Philip that I blest him  
 too;  
 He never meant us anything but good.  
 But if my children care to see me  
 dead,  
 Who hardly knew me living, let them  
 come,  
 I am their father; but she must not  
 come,  
 For my dead face would vex her after-  
 life.  
 And now there is but one of all my  
 blood  
 Who will embrace me in the world-to-  
 be.  
 This hair is his, she cut it off and  
 gave it, 890  
 And I have borne it with me all these  
 years,  
 And thought to bear it with me to my  
 grave;  
 But now my mind is changed, for I  
 shall see him,

My babe in bliss. Wherefore when I  
 am gone,  
 Take, give her this, for it may com-  
 fort her;  
 It will moreover be a token to her  
 That I am he.'

He ceased; and Miriam Lane  
 Made such a voluble answer promis-  
 ing all,  
 That once again he roll'd his eyes upon  
 her  
 Repeating all he wish'd, and once  
 again 900  
 She promised.

Then the third night after this,  
 While Enoch slumber'd motionless  
 and pale,  
 And Miriam watch'd and dozed at in-  
 tervals,  
 There came so loud a calling of the  
 sea  
 That all the houses in the haven rang.  
 He woke, he rose, he spread his arms  
 abroad,  
 Crying with a loud voice, 'A sail! a  
 sail!  
 I am saved;' and so fell back and  
 spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.  
 And when they buried him the little  
 port 910  
 Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

### AYLMER'S FIELD

1793

Dust are our frames; and, gilded  
 dust, our pride  
 Looks only for a moment whole and  
 sound,  
 Like that long buried body of the king,  
 Found lying with his urns and orna-  
 ments,  
 Which at a touch of light, an air of  
 heaven,  
 Slit into ashes, and was found no  
 more.

Here is a story which in rougher  
 shape  
 Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I  
 saw

Sunning himself in a waste field  
 alone —  
 Old, and a mine of memories.— who  
 had served, <sup>10</sup>  
 Long since, a bygone rector of the  
 place,  
 And been himself a part of what he  
 told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that al-  
 mighty man,  
 The county God — in whose capacious  
 hall,  
 Hung with a hundred shields, the  
 family tree  
 Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate  
 king —  
 Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd  
 the spire,  
 Stood from his walls and wing'd his  
 entry-gates,  
 And swang besides on many a windy  
 sign —  
 Whose eyes from under a pyramidal  
 head <sup>20</sup>  
 Saw from his windows nothing save  
 his own —  
 What lovelier of his own had he than  
 her,  
 His only child, his Edith, whom he  
 loved  
 As heiress and not heir regretfully ?  
 But 'he that marries or marries her  
 name.'  
 This fiat somewhat soothed himself  
 and wife,  
 His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,  
 Insipid as the queen upon a card ;  
 Her all of thought and bearing hardly  
 more  
 Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled  
 corn, <sup>31</sup>  
 Little about it stirring save a brook !  
 A sleepy land, where under the same  
 wheel  
 The same old rut would deepen year  
 by year ;  
 Where almost all the village had one  
 name ;  
 Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at  
 the Hall  
 And Averill Averill at the Rectory  
 Thrice over ; so that Rectory and Hall,  
 Bound in an immemorial intimacy,

Were open to each other ; tho' to  
 dream <sup>40</sup>  
 That Love could bind them closer well  
 had made  
 The hoar hair of the baronet bristle up  
 With horror, worse than had he heard  
 his priest  
 Preach an inverted scripture, sons of  
 men,  
 Daughters of God ; so sleepy was the  
 land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd  
 it so,  
 Somewhere beneath his own low range  
 of roofs,  
 Have also set his many-shielded tree ?  
 There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage  
 once,  
 When the red rose was redder than  
 itself, <sup>50</sup>  
 And York's white rose as red as Lan-  
 caster's,  
 With wounded peace which each had  
 prick'd to death.  
 'Not proven,' Averill said, or laugh-  
 ingly,  
 'Some other race of Averills' — proven  
 or no,  
 What cared he ? what, if other or the  
 same ?  
 He lean'd not on his fathers but him-  
 self.  
 But Leolin, his brother, living oft  
 With Averill, and a year or two before  
 Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away  
 By one low voice to one hear neigh-  
 borhood, <sup>60</sup>  
 Would often, in his walks with Edith,  
 claim  
 A distant kinship to the gracious blood  
 That shook the heart of Edith hearing  
 him.

Sanguine he was ; a but less vivaci-  
 hue  
 Than of that islet in the chestnut-  
 bloom  
 Flamed in his cheek ; and eager eyes,  
 that still  
 Took joyful note of all things joyful,  
 beam'd,  
 Beneath a mane-like mass of rolling  
 gold,  
 Their best and brightest when they  
 dwelt on hers,



Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect  
     else, 70  
 But subject to the season or the mood,  
 Shone like a mystic star between the  
     less  
 And greater glory varying to and fro,  
 We know not wherefore; bounteously  
     made,  
 And yet so finely, that a troublous  
     touch  
 Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in  
     a day,  
 A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.  
 And these had been together from the  
     first.  
 Leolin's first nurse was, five years after,  
     hers.  
 So much the boy foreran; but when  
     his date 80  
 Doubled her own, for want of play-  
     mates, he—  
 Since Averill was a decad and a half  
 His elder, and their parents under-  
     ground—  
 Had tost his ball and flown his kite,  
     and roll'd  
 His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her  
     dipt  
 Against the rush of the air in the prone  
     swing,  
 Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, ar-  
     ranged  
 Her garden, sow'd her name and kept  
     it green  
 In living letters, told her fairy-tales,  
 Show'd her the fairy footings on the  
     grass, 90  
 The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,  
 The petty mare's-tail forest, fairy  
     pines,  
 Or from the tiny pitted target blew  
 What look'd a flight of fairy arrows  
     aim'd  
 All at one mark, all hitting, make-  
     believes  
 For Edith and himself; or else he  
     forged,  
 But that was later, boyish histories  
 Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon,  
     wreck,  
 Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and  
     true love  
 Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and  
     faint, 100  
 But where a passion yet unborn per-  
     haps

Lay hidden as the music of the moon  
 Sleeps in the plain eggs of the night-  
     ingale.  
 And thus together, save for college-  
     times  
 Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair  
 As ever painter painted, poet sang,  
 Or heaven in lavish bounty moulded,  
     grew.  
 And more and more, the maiden woman-  
     grown,  
 He wasted hours with Averill; there,  
     when first 109  
 The tented winter-field was broken up  
 Into that phalanx of the summer spears  
 That soon should wear the garland;  
     there again  
 When burr and bine were gather'd;  
     lastly there  
 At Christmas; ever welcome at the  
     Hall,  
 On whose dull sameness his full tide  
     of youth  
 Broke with a phosphorescence charm-  
     ing even  
 My lady, and the baronet yet had  
     laid  
 No bar between them. Dull and self-  
     involved,  
 Tall and erect, but bending from his  
     height  
 With half-allowing smiles for all the  
     world, 120  
 And mighty courteous in the main—  
     his pride  
 Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring—  
 He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,  
 Would care no more for Leolin's walk-  
     ing with her  
 Than for his old Newfoundland's, when  
     they ran  
 To loose him at the stables, for he rose  
 Two-footed at the limit of his chain,  
 Roaring to make a third; and how  
     should Love,  
 Whom the cross lightnings of four  
     chance-met eyes  
 Flash into fiery life from nothing, fol-  
     low 130  
 Such dear familiarities of dawn?  
 Seldom, but when he does, master of  
     all.  
 So these young hearts, not knowing  
     that they loved,  
 Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar

Between them, nor by plight or broken  
     ring  
 Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,  
 Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied  
 By Averill; his, a brother's love, that  
     hung  
 With wings of brooding shelter o'er her  
     peace,  
 Might have been other, save for Leolin's—  
     140  
 Who knows? but so they wander'd,  
     hour by hour  
 Gather'd the blossom that re-bloom'd,  
     and drank  
 The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.  
 For out beyond her lodges, where the  
     brook  
 Vocal, with here and there a silence,  
     ran  
 By sallow rims, arose the laborers'  
     homes,  
 A frequent haunt of Edith, on low  
     knolls  
 That dimpling died into each other,  
     huts  
 At random scatter'd, each a nest in  
     bloom. 150  
 Her art, her hand, her counsel, all had  
     wrought  
 About them. Here was one that, summer-  
     blanch'd,  
 Was parcel-bearded with the traveler's-joy  
 In autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here  
 The warm-blue breathings of a hidden  
     hearth  
 Broke from a bower of vine and  
     honeysuckle.  
 One look'd all rose-tree, and another  
     wore  
 A close-set robe of jasmine sown with  
     stars.  
 This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers  
 About it; this, a milky-way on earth,  
 Like visions in the Northern dreamer's  
     heavens, 161  
 A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;  
 One, almost to the martin-haunted  
     eaves  
 A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;  
 Each, its own charm; and Edith's  
     everywhere;  
 And Edith ever visitant with him,

He but less loved than Edith, of her  
     poor.  
 For she—so lowly-lovely and so lov-  
     ing,  
 Queenly responsive when the loyal  
     hand  
 Rose from the clay it work'd in as she  
     past, 170  
 Not sowing hedgerow texts and pass-  
     ing by,  
 Nor dealing goodly counsel from a  
     height  
 That makes the lowest hate it, but a  
     voice  
 Of comfort and an open hand of help,  
 A splendid presence flattering the  
     poor roofs  
 Revered as theirs, but kindlier than  
     themselves  
 To ailing wife or wailing infancy  
 Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored;  
 He, loved for her and for himself. A  
     grasp  
 Having the warmth and muscle of the  
     heart, 180  
 A childly way with children, and a  
     laugh  
 Ringing like proven golden coinage  
     true,  
 Were no false passport to that easy  
     realm,  
 Where once with Leolin at her side  
     the girl,  
 Nursing a child, and turning to the  
     warmth  
 The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,  
 Heard the good mother softly whisper,  
     'Bless,  
 God bless 'em! marriages are made in  
     heaven.'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it  
     to her.  
 My lady's Indian kinsman unan-  
     nounced 190  
 With half a score of swarthy faces  
     came.  
 His own, tho' keen and bold and sol-  
     dierly,  
 Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not  
     fair;  
 Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled  
     the hour,  
 Tho' seeming boastful. So when first  
     he dash'd  
 Into the chronicle of a deedful day,

Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile  
Of patron, 'Good! my lady's kins-  
man! good!' <sup>198</sup>

My lady with her fingers interlock'd  
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,  
Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear  
To listen; unawares they flitted off,  
Busying themselves about the flower-  
age

That stood from out a stiff brocade in  
which,

The meteor of a splendid season, she,  
Once with this kinsman, ah! so long  
ago,

Stept thro' the stately minuet of those  
days.

But Edith's eager fancy hurried with  
him

Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of  
his life;

Till Leolin, ever watchful of her eye,  
Hated him with a momentary hate. <sup>211</sup>  
Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was  
he.

I know not, for he spoke not, only  
shower'd

His oriental gifts on every one

And most on Edith. Like a storm he  
came,

And shook the house, and like a storm  
he went.

Among the gifts he left her — pos-  
sibly

He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to re-  
turn

When others had been tested — there  
was one,

A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels  
on it <sup>220</sup>

Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd  
itself

Fine as ice-ferns on January panes  
Made by a breath. I know not whence  
at first,

Nor of what race, the work; but as  
he told

The story, storming a hill-fort of  
thieves

He got it; for their captain after fight,  
His comrades having fought their last  
below,

Was climbing up the valley, at whom  
he shot.

Down from the beetling crag to which  
he clung

Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,  
This dagger with him, which, when  
now admired <sup>231</sup>

By Edith whom his pleasure was to  
please,

At once the costly Sahib yielded to  
her.

And Leolin, coming after he was  
gone,

Tost over all her presents petulantly;  
And when she show'd the wealthy  
scabbard, saying,

'Look what a lovely piece of work-  
manship!'

Slight was his answer, 'Well — I care  
not for it.'

Then playing with the blade he prick'd  
his hand,

'A gracious gift to give a lady, this!'  
'But would it be more gracious,' ask'd  
the girl, <sup>241</sup>

'Were I to give this gift of his to one  
That is no lady?' 'Gracious? No,'  
said he.

'Me? — but I cared not for it. O,  
pardon me,

I seem to be ungraciousness itself.'

'Take it,' she added sweetly, 'tho'  
his gift;

For I am more ungracious even than  
you,

I care not for it either;' and he said,  
'Why, then I love it;' but Sir Aylmer  
past,

And neither loved nor liked the thing  
he heard. <sup>250</sup>

The next day came a neighbor.  
Blues and reds

They talk'd of; blues were sure of it,  
he thought;

Then of the latest fox — where started  
— kill'd

In such a bottom. 'Peter had the  
brush,

My Peter, first;' and did Sir Aylmer  
know

That great pock-pitten fellow had  
been caught?

Then made his pleasure echo, hand to  
hand,

And rolling as it were the substance  
of it

Between his palms a moment up and  
down —

'The birds were warm, the birds were  
 warm upon him; <sup>260</sup>  
 We have him now; ' and had Sir Ayl-  
 mer heard—  
 Nay, but he must—the land was  
 ringing of it—  
 This blacksmith border-marriage—  
 one they knew—  
 Raw from the nursery—who could  
 trust a child?  
 That cursed France with her egalities!  
 And did Sir Aylmer—deferentially  
 With nearing chair and lower'd accent  
 —think—  
 For people talk'd—that it was wholly  
 wise  
 To let that handsome fellow Averill  
 walk  
 So freely with his daughter? people  
 talk'd— <sup>270</sup>  
 The boy might get a notion into  
 him;  
 The girl might be entangled ere she  
 knew.  
 Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening  
 spoke:  
 'The girl and boy, sir, know their  
 differences!'  
 'Good,' said his friend, 'but watch!'  
 and he, 'Enough,  
 More than enough, sir! I can guard  
 my own.'  
 They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer  
 watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the  
 house  
 Had fallen first, was Edith that same  
 night;  
 Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a  
 rough piece <sup>280</sup>  
 Of early rigid color, under which  
 Withdrawing by the counter door to  
 that  
 Which Leolin open'd, she cast back  
 upon him  
 A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He,  
 as one  
 Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,  
 And pelted with outrageous epithets,  
 Turning beheld the Powers of the  
 House  
 On either side the hearth, indignant;  
 her,  
 Cooling her false cheek with a feather  
 fan,

Him, glaring, by his own stale devil  
 spurr'd, <sup>290</sup>  
 And, like a beast hard-ridden, breath-  
 ing hard.  
 'Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,  
 Presumptuous! trusted as he was with  
 her,  
 The sole succeder to their wealth,  
 their lands,  
 The last remaining pillar of their  
 house,  
 The one transmitter of their ancient  
 name,  
 Their child,' 'Our child!' 'Our  
 heiress!' 'Ours!' for still,  
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow,  
 came  
 Her sicklier iteration. Last he said:  
 'Boy, mark me! for your fortunes  
 are to make. <sup>300</sup>  
 I swear you shall not make them out  
 of mine.  
 Now inasmuch as you have practised  
 on her,  
 Perplexed her, made her half forget  
 herself,  
 Swerve from her duty to herself and  
 us—  
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossi-  
 ble,  
 Far as we track ourselves—I say that  
 this—  
 Else I withdraw favor and counte-  
 nance  
 From you and yours for ever—shall  
 you do.  
 Sir, when you see her—but you shall  
 not see her—  
 No, you shall write, and not to her,  
 but me; <sup>310</sup>  
 And you shall say that having spoken  
 with me,  
 And after look'd into yourself, you  
 find  
 That you meant nothing—as indeed  
 you know  
 That you meant nothing. Such a  
 match as this!  
 Impossible, prodigious!' These were  
 words,  
 As noted by his measure of himself,  
 Arguing boundless forbearance: after  
 which,  
 And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, 'I  
 So foul a traitor to myself and her!  
 Never, O, never!' for about as long

As the wind-hover hangs in balance,  
 paused<sup>321</sup>  
 Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm  
 within,  
 Then broke all bonds of courtesey, and  
 crying,  
 'Boy, should I find you by my doors  
 again,  
 My men shall lash you from them like  
 a dog;  
 Hence!' with a sudden execration  
 drove  
 The footstool from before him, and  
 arose;  
 So, stammering 'scoundrel' out of  
 teeth that ground  
 As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin  
 still  
 Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old  
 man<sup>330</sup>  
 Follow'd, and under his own lintel  
 stood  
 Storming with lifted hands, a hoary  
 face  
 Meet for the reverence of the hearth,  
 but now,  
 Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd  
 moon,  
 Vext with unworthy madness, and  
 deform'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful  
 eye  
 That watch'd him, till he heard the  
 ponderous door  
 Close, crashing with long echoes thro'  
 the land,  
 Went Leolin; then, his passions all in  
 flood  
 And masters of his motion, furiously  
 Down thro' the bright lawns to his  
 brother's ran,<sup>341</sup>  
 And foam'd away his heart at Aver-  
 ill's ear;  
 Whom Averill solaced as he might,  
 amazed:  
 The man was his, had been his father's  
 friend;  
 He must have seen, himself had seen  
 it long;  
 He must have known, himself had  
 known; besides,  
 He never yet had set his daughter  
 forth  
 Here in the woman-markets of the  
 west,

Where our Caucasians let themselves  
 be sold.  
 Some one, he thought, had slander'd  
 Leolin to him.<sup>350</sup>  
 'Brother, for I have loved you more  
 as son  
 Than brother, let me tell you: I my-  
 self—  
 What is their pretty saying? jilted, is  
 it?  
 Jilted I was; I say it for your peace.  
 Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the  
 shame  
 The woman should have borne, hu-  
 miliated,  
 I lived for years a stunted sunless  
 life;  
 Till after our good parents past away  
 Watching your growth, I seem'd again  
 to grow.<sup>359</sup>  
 Leolin, I almost sin in envying you.  
 The very whitest lamb in all my fold  
 Loves you; I know her; the worst  
 thought she has  
 Is whiter even than her pretty hand.  
 She must prove true; for, brother,  
 where two fight  
 The strongest wins, and truth and  
 love are strength,  
 And you are happy; let her parents  
 be.'

But Leolin cried out the more upon  
 them—  
 Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress,  
 wealth,  
 Their wealth, their heiress! wealth  
 enough was theirs  
 For twenty matches. Were he lord  
 of this,<sup>370</sup>  
 Why, twenty boys and girls should  
 marry on it,  
 And forty blest ones bless him, and  
 himself  
 Be wealthy still, ay, wealthier. He  
 believed  
 This filthy marriage-hindering Mam-  
 mon made  
 The harlot of the cities; Nature crost  
 Was mother of the foul adulteries  
 That saturate soul with body. Name,  
 too! name,  
 Their ancient name! they *might* be  
 proud; its worth  
 Was being Edith's. Ah, how pale  
 she had look'd



AYLMER HALL

<p>Darling, to-night ! they must have              rated her <span style="float: right;">380</span>          Beyond all tolerance. These old              pheasant-lords,          These partridge-breeders of a thou-              sand years,          Who had mildew'd in their thousands,              doing nothing          Since Egbert — why, the greater their              disgrace !          Fall back upon a name ! rest, rot in              that !          Not <i>keep</i> it noble, make it nobler ?              fools,          With such a vantage-ground for noble-              ness !          He had known a man, a quintessence              of man,          The life of all — who madly loved —              and he,          Thwarted by one of these old father-              fools, <span style="float: right;">390</span>          Had rioted his life out, and made an              end.</p>	<p>He would not do it ! her sweet face              and faith          Held him from that ; but he had pow-              ers, he knew it.          Back would he to his studies, make a              name,          Name, fortune too ; the world should              ring of him,          To shame these mouldy Aylmers in              their graves.          Chancellor, or what is greatest would              he be —          'O brother, I am grieved to learn              your grief —          Give me my fling, and let me say my              say.'</p> <p style="text-align: right;">At which, like one that sees his own              excess, <span style="float: right;">400</span>          And easily forgives it as his own,          He laugh'd, and then was mute, but              presently          Wept like a storm ; and honest Aver              ill, seeing</p>
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How low his brother's mood had fallen,  
 fetch'd  
 His richest bee's-wing from a binn re-  
 served  
 For banquets, praised the waning red,  
 and told  
 The vintage — when *this* Aylmer came  
 of age —  
 Then drank and past it; till at length  
 the two,  
 Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again,  
 agreed  
 That much allowance must be made  
 for men.  
 After an angry dream this kindlier  
 glow  
 Faded with morning, but his purpose  
 held.

Yet once by night again the lovers  
 met,  
 A perilous meeting under the tall  
 pines  
 That darken'd all the northward of  
 her Hall.  
 Him, to her meek and modest bosom  
 prest  
 In agony, she promised that no force,  
 Persuasion, no, nor death could alter  
 her;  
 He, passionately hopefuller, would go,  
 Labor for his own Edith, and return  
 In such a sunlight of prosperity  
 He should not be rejected. 'Write  
 to me!  
 They loved me, and because I love  
 their child  
 They hate me. There is war between  
 us, dear,  
 Which breaks all bonds but ours; we  
 must remain  
 Sacred to one another.' So they  
 talk'd,  
 Poor children, for their comfort. The  
 wind blew,  
 The rain of heaven and their own bit-  
 ter tears,  
 Tears and the careless rain of heaven,  
 mixt  
 Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each  
 other  
 In darkness, and above them roar'd  
 the pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task  
 ourselves

To learn a language known but smat-  
 teringly  
 In phrases here and there at random,  
 toil'd  
 Mastering the lawless science of our  
 law,  
 That codeless myriad of precedent,  
 That wilderness of single instances,  
 Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune  
 led,  
 May beat a pathway out to wealth  
 and fame.  
 The jests, that flash'd about the plead-  
 er's room,  
 Lightning of the hour, the pun, the  
 scurrilous tale, —  
 Old scandals buried now seven decads  
 deep  
 In other scandals that have lived and  
 died,  
 And left the living scandal that shall  
 die —  
 Were dead to him already; bent as he  
 was  
 To make disproof of scorn, and strong  
 in hopes,  
 And prodigal of all brain-labor he,  
 Charier of sleep, and wine, and exer-  
 cise,  
 Except when for a breathing-while at  
 eve,  
 Some niggard fraction of an hour, he  
 ran  
 Beside the river-bank. And then in-  
 deed  
 Harder the times were, and the hands  
 of power  
 Were bloodier, and the according  
 hearts of men  
 Seem'd harder too; but the soft river-  
 breeze,  
 Which fann'd the gardens of that  
 rival rose  
 Yet fragrant in a heart remembering  
 His former talks with Edith, on him  
 breathed  
 Far purer in his rushings to and  
 fro,  
 After his books, to flush his blood with  
 air,  
 Then to his books again. My lady's  
 cousin,  
 Half-sickening of his pension'd after-  
 noon,  
 Drove in upon the student once or  
 twice,

Ran a Malayan amuck against the  
 times,  
 Had golden hopes for France and all  
 mankind,  
 Answer'd all queries touching those at  
 home  
 With a heaved shoulder and a saucy  
 smile,  
 And fain had haled him out into the  
 world,  
 And air'd him there. His nearer  
 friend would say,  
 'Screw not the chord too sharply lest  
 it snap.'  
 Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger  
 forth <sup>470</sup>  
 From where his worldless heart had  
 kept it warm,  
 Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.  
 And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of  
 him  
 Approvingly, and prophesied his rise;  
 For heart, I think, help'd head. Her  
 letters too,  
 Tho' far between, and coming fitfully  
 Like broken music, written as she  
 found  
 Or made occasion, being strictly  
 watch'd,  
 Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till  
 he saw  
 An end, a hope, a light breaking upon  
 him. <sup>480</sup>

But they that cast her spirit into  
 flesh,  
 Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued  
 themselves  
 To sell her, those good parents, for her  
 good.  
 Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth  
 Might lie within their compass, him  
 they lured  
 Into their net made pleasant by the  
 baits  
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to  
 woo.  
 So month by month the noise about  
 their doors,  
 And distant blaze of those dull ban-  
 quets, made  
 The nightly wirer of their innocent  
 hare <sup>490</sup>  
 Falter before he took it. All in vain.  
 Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, re-  
 turn'd

Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit  
 So often, that the folly taking wings  
 Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the  
 wind  
 With rumor, and became in other  
 fields  
 A mockery to the yeomen over ale,  
 And laughter to their lords. But those  
 at home,  
 As hunters round a hunted creature  
 draw  
 The cordon close and closer toward  
 the death, <sup>500</sup>  
 Narrow'd her goings out and comings  
 in;  
 Forbade her first the house of Averill,  
 Then closed her access to the wealth-  
 ier farms,  
 Last from her own home-circle of the  
 poor  
 They barr'd her. Yet she bore it, yet  
 her cheek  
 Kept color — wondrous! but, O mys-  
 tery!  
 What amulet drew her down to that  
 old oak,  
 So old, that twenty years before, a  
 part  
 Falling had let appear the brand of  
 John —  
 Once grove-like, each huge arm a tree,  
 but now <sup>510</sup>  
 The broken base of a black tower, a  
 cave  
 Of touchwood, with a single flourish-  
 ing spray.  
 There the manorial lord too curiously  
 Raking in that millennial touchwood-  
 dust  
 Found for himself a bitter treasure  
 trove;  
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and  
 read  
 Writhing a letter from his child, for  
 which  
 Came at the moment Leolin's emis-  
 sary,  
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to  
 fly,  
 But scared with threats of jail and  
 halter gave <sup>520</sup>  
 To him that fluster'd his poor parish  
 wits  
 The letter which he brought, and  
 swore besides  
 To play their go-between as heretofore



Nor let them know themselves be-  
tray'd ; and then,  
Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,  
went  
Hating his own lean heart and miser-  
able.

Thenceforward oft from out a des-  
pot dream  
The father panting woke, and oft, as  
dawn  
Aroused the black republic on his  
clms,  
Sweeping the froth-fly from the fescue  
brush'd  
Thro' the dim meadow toward his<sup>530</sup>  
treasure-trove,  
Seized it, took home, and to my lady,  
— who made  
A downward crescent of her minion  
mouth,  
Listless in all despondence, — read ;  
and tore,  
As if the living passion symbol'd  
there  
Were living nerves to feel the rent ;  
and burnt,  
Now chafing at his own great self de-  
fied,  
Now striking on huge stumbling-  
blocks of scorn  
In babyisms and dear diminutives  
Scatter'd all over the vocabulary<sup>540</sup>  
Of such a love as like a chidden child,  
After much wailing, hush'd itself at  
last  
Hopeless of answer. Then tho' Aver-  
ill wrote  
And bade him with good heart sus-  
tain himself —  
All would be well — the lover heeded  
not,  
But passionately restless came and  
went,  
And rustling once at night about the  
place,  
There by a keeper shot at, slightly  
hurt,  
Raging return'd. Nor was it well for  
her  
Kept to the garden now, and grove of  
pines,<sup>550</sup>  
Watch'd even there ; and one was set  
to watch  
The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd  
them all,

Yet bitterer from his readings. Once  
indeed,  
Warm'd with his wines, or taking  
pride in her,  
She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her ten-  
derly,  
Not knowing what possess'd him.  
That one kiss  
Was Leolin's one strong rival upon  
earth ;  
Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,  
Seem'd hope's returning rose ; and  
then ensued  
A Martin's summer of his faded  
love,<sup>560</sup>  
Or ordeal by kindness. After this  
He seldom crost his child without a  
sneer ;  
The mother flow'd in shallower acri-  
monies,  
Never one kindly smile, one kindly  
word ;  
So that the gentle creature shut from  
all  
Her charitable use, and face to face  
With twenty months of silence, slowly  
lost,  
Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on  
life.  
Last some low fever ranging round to  
spy  
The weakness of a people or a  
house,<sup>570</sup>  
Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer,  
or men,  
Or almost all that is, hurting the  
hurt —  
Save Christ as we believe him — found  
the girl  
And flung her down upon a couch of  
fire,  
Where careless of the household faces  
near,  
And crying upon the name of Leolin,  
She, and with her the race of Aylmer,  
past.

Star to star vibrates light ; may soul  
to soul  
Strike thro' a finer element of her own ?  
So, — from afar, — touch as at once ?  
or why<sup>580</sup>  
That night, that moment, when she  
named his name,  
Did the keen shriek, ' Yes, love, yes,  
Edith, yes,'

ShriU, till the comrade of his chambers  
 woke,  
 And came upon him half-arisen from  
 sleep,  
 With a weird bright eye, sweating and  
 trembling,  
 His hair as it were crackling into flames,  
 His body half flung forward in pur-  
 suit,  
 And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp  
 a flyer.  
 Nor knew he wherefore he had made  
 the cry;  
 And being much befool'd and idi-  
 oted  
 By the rough amity of the other, <sup>590</sup>  
 sank  
 As into sleep again. The second day,  
 My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,  
 A breaker of the bitter news from  
 home,  
 Found a dead man, a letter edged  
 with death  
 Beside him, and the dagger which  
 himself  
 Gave Edith, reddened with no bandit's  
 blood;  
 'From Edith' was engraven on the  
 blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon  
 his death.  
 And when he came again, his flock be-  
 lieved — <sup>600</sup>  
 Beholding how the years which are  
 not Time's  
 Had blasted him—that many thou-  
 sand days  
 Were clipt by horror from his term of  
 life.  
 Yet the sad mother, for the second  
 death  
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness  
 of the first,  
 And being used to find her pastor  
 texts,  
 Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying  
 him  
 To speak before the people of her child,  
 And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that  
 day rose.  
 Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded  
 woods <sup>610</sup>  
 Was all the life of it; for hard on these,  
 A breathless burthen of low-folded  
 heavens

Stifled and chill'd at once; but every  
 roof  
 Sent out a listener. Many too had  
 known  
 Edith among the hamlets round, and  
 since  
 The parents' harshness and the hapless  
 loves  
 And double death were widely mur-  
 mur'd, left  
 Their own gray tower, or plain-faced  
 tabernacle,  
 To hear him; all in mourning these,  
 and those  
 With blots of it about them, ribbon,  
 glove, <sup>620</sup>  
 Or kerchief; while the church, — one  
 night, except  
 For greenish glimmerings thro' the  
 lancets, — made  
 Still paler the pale head of him, who  
 tower'd  
 Above them, with his hopes in either  
 grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd  
 Averill,  
 His face magnetic to the hand from  
 which  
 Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd  
 thro'  
 His brief prayer-prelude, gave the  
 verse, 'Behold,  
 Your house is left unto you desolate !'  
 But lapsed into so long a pause again  
 As half amazed, half frightened, all his  
 flock; <sup>631</sup>  
 Then from his height and loneliness of  
 grief  
 Bore down in flood, and dash'd his  
 angry heart  
 Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became  
 one sea,  
 Which rolling o'er the palaces of the  
 proud,  
 And all but those who knew the living  
 God —  
 Eight that were left to make a purer  
 world —  
 When since had flood, fire, earthquake,  
 thunder, wrought  
 Such waste and havoc as the idola-  
 tries <sup>640</sup>  
 Which from the low light of mortality

Shot up their shadows to the heaven  
of heavens,

And worship their own darkness in  
the Highest?

'Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy  
brute Baal,

And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,  
For with thy worst self hast thou  
clothed thy God.

Then came a Lord in no wise like to  
Baal.

The babe shall lead the lion. Surely  
now

The wilderness shall blossom as the  
rose.

Crown thyself, worm, and worship  
thine own lusts! — <sup>650</sup>

No coarse and blockish God of acreage  
Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel  
to —

Thy God is far diffused in noble groves  
And princely halls, and farms, and  
flowing lawns,

And heaps of living gold that daily  
grow,

And title-scrolls and gorgeous herald-  
ries.

In such a shape dost thou behold thy  
God.

Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him* ;  
for thine

Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair  
Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while  
The deathless ruler of thy dying house  
Is wounded to the death that cannot  
die ; <sup>662</sup>

And tho' thou numberest with the  
followers

Of One who cried, "Leave all and  
follow me."

Thee therefore with His light about  
thy feet,

Thee with His message ringing in thine  
ears,

Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord  
from heaven,

Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,  
Wonderful, Prince of Peace, the  
Mighty God,

Count the more base idolater of the  
two ; <sup>670</sup>

Crueller, as not passing thro' the fire  
Bodies, but souls — thy children's —  
thro' the smoke,

The blight of low desires — darkening  
thine own

To thine own likeness; or if one of  
these,

Thy better born unhappily from thee,  
Should, as by miracle, grow straight  
and fair —

Friends, I was bid to speak to such a  
one

By those who most have cause to sor-  
row for her —

Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well.  
Fairer than Ruth among the fields of  
corn, <sup>680</sup>

Fair as the Angel that said "Hail!"  
she seem'd,

Who entering fill'd the house with sud-  
den light.

For so mine own was brighten'd —  
where indeed

The roof so lowly but that beam of  
heaven

Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway?  
whose the babe

Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,  
Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child  
of shame,

The common care whom no one cared  
for, leapt

To greet her, wasting his forgotten  
heart,

As with the mother he had never  
known, <sup>690</sup>

In gambols; for her fresh and inno-  
cent eyes

Had such a star of morning in their  
blue,

That all neglected places of the field  
Broke into nature's music when they  
saw her.

Low was her voice, but won mysteri-  
ous way

Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder  
one

Was all but silence — free of alms her  
hand —

The hand that rob'd your cottage-  
walls with flowers

Has often toil'd to clothe your little  
ones ;

How often placed upon the sick man's  
brow <sup>700</sup>

Cool'd it, or laid his feverish pillow  
smooth!

Had you one sorrow and she shared it  
not?

One burthen and she would not lighten  
it?

One spiritual doubt she did not soothe ?  
 Or when some heat of difference spark-  
     kled out,  
 How sweetly would she glide between  
     your wraths,  
 And steal you from each other ! for  
     she walk'd  
 Wearing the light yoke of that Lord  
     of love  
 Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee !  
 And one — of him I was not bid to  
     speak —  
 Was always with her, whom you also<sup>710</sup>  
     knew.  
 Him too you loved, for he was worthy  
     love.  
 And these had been together from the  
     first ;  
 They might have been together till  
     the last.  
 Friends, this frail bark of ours, when  
     sorely tried,  
 May wreck itself without the pilot's  
     guilt,  
 Without the captain's knowledge ;  
     hope with me.  
 Whose shame is that, if he went hence  
     with shame ?  
 Nor mine the fault, if losing both of  
     these  
 I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd  
     walls,<sup>720</sup>  
 " My house is left unto me desolate. "

While thus he spoke, his hearers  
     wept ; but some,  
 Sons of the glebe, with other frowns  
     than those  
 That knit themselves for summer  
     shadow, scowl'd  
 At their great lord. He, when it  
     seem'd he saw  
 No pale sheet-lightnings from afar,  
     but fork'd  
 Of the near storm, and aiming at his  
     head,  
 Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, sol-  
     dier-like,  
 Erect ; but when the preacher's ca-  
     dence flow'd  
 Softening thro' all the gentle attri-  
     butes<sup>730</sup>  
 Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd  
     his face,  
 Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron  
     mouth ;

And ' O, pray God that he hold up ! '   
     she thought,  
 ' Or surely I shall shame myself and  
     him. '

' Nor yours the blame — for who  
     beside your hearths  
 Can take her place — if echoing me  
     you cry  
 " Our house is left unto us desolate " ?  
 But thou, O thou that killest, hadst  
     thou known,  
 O thou that stonest, hadst thou under-  
     stood  
 The things belonging to thy peace and  
     ours !<sup>740</sup>  
 Is there no prophet but the voice that  
     calls  
 Doom upon kings, or in the waste " Re-  
     pent " ?  
 Is not our own child on the narrow  
     way,  
 Who down to those that saunter in  
     the broad  
 Cries, " Come up hither, " as a prophet  
     to us ?  
 Is there no stoning save with flint and  
     rock ?  
 Yes, as the dead we weep for testify —  
 No desolation but by sword and fire ?  
 Yes, as your moanings witness, and  
     myself  
 Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my  
     loss.<sup>750</sup>  
 Give me your prayers, for he is past  
     your prayers,  
 Not past the living fount of pity in  
     heaven.  
 But I that thought myself long-suf-  
     fering, meek,  
 Exceeding " poor in spirit " — how the  
     words  
 Have twisted back upon themselves,  
     and mean  
 Vileness, we are grown so proud — I  
     wish'd my voice  
 A rushing tempest of the wrath of  
     God  
 To blow these sacrifices thro' the  
     world —  
 Sent like the twelve-divided concubine  
 To inflame the tribes ; but there —  
     out yonder — earth<sup>760</sup>  
 Lightens from her own central hell —  
     O, there  
 The red fruit of an old idolatry —

The heads of chiefs and princes fall  
 so fast,  
 They cling together in the ghastly  
 sack —  
 The land all shambles — naked mar-  
 riages  
 Flash from the bridge, and ever-  
 murder'd France,  
 By shores that darken with the gather-  
 ing wolf,  
 Runs in a river of blood to the sick  
 sea.

Is this a time to madden madness then ?  
 Was this a time for these to flaunt  
 their pride ?

May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as  
 dense as those

Which hid the Holiest from the peo-  
 ple's eyes

Ere the great death, shroud this great  
 sin from all !

Doubtless our narrow world must  
 canvass it.

O, rather pray for those and pity  
 them,

Who, thro' their own desire accom-  
 plish'd, bring

Their own gray hairs with sorrow to  
 the grave —

Who broke the bond which they de-  
 sired to break,

Which else had link'd their race with  
 times to come —

Who wove coarse webs to snare her  
 purity,

Grossly contriving their dear daugh-  
 ter's good —

Poor souls, and knew not what they  
 did, but sat

Ignorant, devising their own daugh-  
 ter's death !

May not that earthly chastisement  
 suffice ?

Have not our love and reverence left  
 them bare ?

Will not another take their heritage ?  
 Will there be children's laughter in  
 their hall

For ever and for ever, or one stone  
 Left on another, or is it a light thing

That I, their guest, their host, their  
 ancient friend,

I made by these the last of all my  
 race,

Must cry to these the last of theirs, as  
 cried

Christ ere His agony to those that  
 swore

Not by the temple but the gold, and  
 made

Their own traditions God, and slew  
 the Lord,

And left their memories a world's  
 curse — "Behold,

Your house is left unto you deso-  
 late" ?

Ended he had not, but she brook'd  
 no more,

Long since her heart had beat remorse-  
 lessly,

Her cramp'd-up sorrow pain'd her, and  
 a sense

Of meanness in her unresisting life.  
 Then their eyes vex'd her ; for on enter-  
 ing

He had cast the curtains of their seat  
 aside —

Black velvet of the costliest — she her-  
 self

Had seen to that. Fain had she closed  
 them now,

Yet dared not stir to do it, only  
 near'd

Her husband inch by inch, but when  
 she laid,

Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he  
 veil'd

His face with the other, and at once,  
 as falls

A creeper when the prop is broken,  
 fell

The woman shrieking at his feet, and  
 swoon'd.

Then her own people bore along the  
 nave

Her pendent hands, and narrow mea-  
 gre face

Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty  
 years.

And her the lord of all the landscape  
 round

Even to its last horizon, and of all  
 Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd  
 out

Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle  
 Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded  
 ways

Stumbling across the market to his  
 death,

Uapitied ; for he groped as blind, and  
 seem'd

Always about to fall, grasping the  
pews  
And oaken finials till he touch'd the  
door ;  
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot  
stood,  
Strode from the porch, tall and erect  
again.

But nevermore did either pass the  
gate  
Save under pall with bearers In one  
month,  
Thro' weary and yet ever wearier  
hours,  
The childless mother went to seek her  
child ;  
And when he felt the silence of his  
house <sup>830</sup>  
About him, and the change and not  
the change,  
And those fixt eyes of painted ances-  
tors  
Staring for ever from their gilded  
walls  
On him their last descendant, his own  
head  
Began to droop, to fall. The man  
became  
Imbecile ; his one word was ' deso-  
late.'  
Dead for two years before his death  
was he ;  
But when the second Christmas came,  
escaped  
His keepers, and the silence which he  
felt,  
To find a deeper in the narrow gloom  
By wife and child ; nor wanted at his  
end <sup>841</sup>  
The dark retinue reverencing death  
At golden thresholds ; nor from tender  
hearts,  
And those who sorrow'd o'er a van-  
ish'd race,  
Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.  
Then the great Hall was wholly  
broken down,  
And the broad woodland parcell'd  
into farms ;  
And where the two contrived their  
daughter's good,  
Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has  
made his run,  
The hedgehog underneath the plan-  
tain bores, <sup>850</sup>

The rabbit fondles his own harmless  
face,  
The slow-worm creeps, and the thin  
weasel there  
Follows the mouse, and all is open  
field.

## SEA DREAMS

A city clerk, but gently born and  
bred ;  
His wife, an unknown artist's orphan  
child —  
One babe was theirs, a Margaret,  
three years old  
They, thinking that her clear german-  
der eye  
Droopt in the giant-factoried city-  
gloom,  
Came, with a month's leave given  
them, to the sea ;  
For which his gains were dock'd,  
however small.  
Small were his gains, and hard his  
work ; besides,  
Their slender household fortunes —  
for the man  
Had risk'd his little—like the little  
thrift, <sup>10</sup>  
Trembled in perilous places o'er a  
deep.  
And oft, when sitting all alone, his  
face  
Would darken, as he cursed his cred-  
ulousness,  
And that one unctuous mouth which  
lured him, rogue,  
To buy strange shares in some Peru-  
vian mine.  
Now seaward-bound for health they  
gain'd a coast,  
All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning  
cave,  
At close of day ; slept, woke, and  
went the next,  
The Sabbath, pious variers from the  
church,  
To chapel ; where a heated pulpiteer,  
Not preaching simple Christ to simple  
men, <sup>21</sup>  
Announced the coming doom, and  
fulminated  
Against the Scarlet Woman and her  
creed.  
For sideways up he swung his arms,  
and shriek'd

'Thus, thus with violence,' even as  
 if he held  
 The Apocalyptic millstone, and him-  
 self  
 Were that great angel; 'Thus with  
 violence  
 Shall Babylon be cast into the sea;  
 Then comes the close.' The gentle-  
 hearted wife  
 Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world,  
 He at his own; but when the wordy  
 storm<sup>31</sup>  
 Had ended, forth they came and paced  
 the shore,  
 Ran in and out the long sea-framing  
 caves,  
 Drank the large air, and saw, but  
 scarce believed—  
 The soot-flake of so many a summer  
 still  
 Clung to their fancies—that they saw,  
 the sea.  
 So now on sand they walk'd, and now  
 on cliff,  
 Lingering about the thymy promon-  
 tories,  
 Till all the sails were darken'd in the  
 west,  
 And rosed in the east, then homeward  
 and to bed;<sup>40</sup>  
 Where she, who kept a tender Chris-  
 tian hope,  
 Haunting a holy text, and still to  
 that  
 Returning, as the bird returns, at  
 night,  
 'Let not the sun go down upon your  
 wrath,'  
 Said, 'Love, forgive him.' But he did  
 not speak;  
 And silenced by that silence lay the  
 wife,  
 Remembering her dear Lord who died  
 for all,  
 And musing on the little lives of men,  
 And how they mar this little by their  
 feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a  
 full tide<sup>50</sup>  
 Rose with ground-swell, which, on the  
 foremost rocks  
 Touching, upjetted in spirts of wild  
 sea-smoke,  
 And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam,  
 and fell

In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon  
 Dead claps of thunder from within  
 the cliffs  
 Heard thro' the living roar. At this  
 the babe,  
 Their Margaret cradled near them,  
 wail'd and woke  
 The mother, and the father suddenly  
 cried,  
 'A wreck, a wreck!' then turn'd and  
 groaning said:

'Forgive! How many will say,  
 "forgive," and find<sup>60</sup>  
 A sort of absolution in the sound  
 To hate a little longer! No; the sin  
 That neither God nor man can well  
 forgive,  
 Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.  
 Is it so true that second thoughts are  
 best?  
 Not first, and third, which are a riper  
 first?  
 Too ripe, too late! they come too late  
 for use.  
 Ah, love, there surely lives in man  
 and beast  
 Something divine to warn them of  
 their foes;  
 And such a sense, when first I fronted  
 him,<sup>70</sup>  
 Said, "Trust him not;" but after,  
 when I came  
 To know him more, I lost it, knew him  
 less,  
 Fought with what seem'd my own un-  
 charity,  
 Sat at his table, drank his costly  
 wines,  
 Made more and more allowance for his  
 talk;  
 Went further, fool! and trusted him  
 with all,  
 All my poor scrapings from a dozen  
 years  
 Of dust and desk-work. There is no  
 such mine,  
 None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing  
 gold,  
 Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea  
 roars<sup>80</sup>  
 Ruin—a fearful night!'

'Not fearful; fair,'  
 Said the good wife, 'if every star in  
 heaven



“ ‘I dream’d  
Of such a tide swelling toward the land ’ ”

Can make it fair; you do but hear the  
tide.  
Had you ill dreams?’

‘O, yes,’ he said, ‘I dream’d  
Of such a tide swelling toward the  
land,  
And I from out the boundless outer  
deep  
Swept with it to the shore, and enter’d  
one  
Of those dark caves that run beneath  
the cliffs.  
I thought the motion of the boundless  
deep  
Bore thro’ the cave, and I was heaved  
upon it  
In darkness; then I saw one lovely star<sup>90</sup>  
Larger and larger. “What a world,”  
I thought,  
“To live in!” but in moving on I  
found

Only the landward exit of the cave,  
Bright with the sun upon the stream  
beyond;  
And near the light a giant woman sat,  
All over earthy, like a piece of earth,  
A pickaxe in her hand. Then out I  
slipt  
Into a land all sun and blossom, trees  
As high as heaven, and every bird that  
sings;  
And here the night-light flickering in<sup>100</sup>  
my eyes  
Awoke me.’

‘That was then your dream,’ she  
said,  
‘Not sad, but sweet.’

‘So sweet, I lay,’ said he,  
‘And mused upon it, drifting up the  
stream  
In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced



The broken vision ; for I dream'd that still  
 The motion of the great deep bore me on,  
 And that the woman walk'd upon the brink.  
 I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her of it.  
 "It came," she said, "by working in the mines."<sup>110</sup>  
 O, then to ask her of my shares, I thought ;  
 And ask'd ; but not a word ; she shook her head.  
 And then the motion of the current ceased,  
 And there was rolling thunder ; and we reach'd  
 A mountain, like a wall of burs and thorns ;  
 But she with her strong feet up the steep hill  
 Trod out a path. I follow'd, and at top  
 She pointed seaward ; there a fleet of glass,  
 That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,  
 Sailing along before a gloomy cloud  
 That not one moment ceased to thunder, past<sup>121</sup>  
 In sunshine. Right across its track there lay,  
 Down in the water, a long reef of gold,  
 Or what seem'd gold ; and I was glad at first  
 To think that in our often-ransack'd world  
 Still so much gold was left ; and then I fear'd  
 Lest the gay navy there should splinter on it,  
 And fearing waved my arm to warn them off ;  
 An idle signal, for the brittle fleet—  
 I thought I could have died to save it—near'd,<sup>130</sup>  
 Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and vanish'd, and I woke,  
 I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see  
 My dream was Life, the woman honest Work,  
 And my poor venture but a fleet of glass  
 Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold.'

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to comfort him,  
 'You raised your arm, you tumbled down and broke  
 The glass with little Margaret's medicine in it ;  
 And, breaking that, you made and broke your dream.  
 A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks.'  
 'No trifle,' groan'd the husband ;  
 'yesterday<sup>141</sup>  
 I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd  
 That which I ask'd the woman in my dream.  
 Like her, he shook his head. "Show me the books !"  
 He dodged me with a long and loose account.  
 "The books, the books !" but he, he could not wait,  
 Bound on a matter he of life and death ;  
 When the great Books—see Danici seven and ten—  
 Were open'd, I should find he meant me well ;  
 And then began to bloat himself, and ooze<sup>150</sup>  
 All over with the fat affectionate smile  
 That makes the widow lean. "My dearest friend,  
 Have faith, have faith ! We live by faith," said he ;  
 "And all things work together for the good  
 Of those"—it makes me sick to quote him—last  
 Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-you went.  
 I stood like one that had received a blow.  
 I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,  
 A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,  
 A curse in his God-bless-you ; then my eyes<sup>160</sup>  
 Pursued him down the street, and far away,  
 Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,  
 Read rascal in the motions of his back,  
 And scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee.'

'Was he so bound, poor soul?' said  
the good wife;  
'So are we all; but do not call him,  
love,  
Before you prove him, rogue, and  
proved, forgive.  
His gain is loss; for he that wrongs  
his friend  
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears  
about  
A silent court of justice in his breast,  
Himself the judge and jury, and him-  
self  
The prisoner at the bar, ever con-  
demn'd.  
And that drags down his life; then  
comes what comes  
Hereafter; and he meant, he said he  
meant,  
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant,  
you well.'

"With all his conscience and one  
eye askew"—  
Love, let me quote these lines, that  
you may learn  
A man is likewise counsel for himself,  
Too often, in that silent court of  
yours—  
"With all his conscience and one eye  
askew,  
So false, he partly took himself for  
true;  
Whose pious talk, when most his  
heart was dry,  
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round  
his eye;  
• Who, never naming God except for  
gain,  
So never took that useful name in vain,  
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross  
his tool,  
And Christ the bait to trap his dupe  
and fool;  
Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace  
he forged,  
And snake-like slimed his victim ere  
he gorged;  
And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the  
rest  
Arising, did his holy oily best,  
Dropping the too rough H in Hell  
and Heaven,  
To spread the Word by which himself  
had thriven."  
How like you this old satire?'

'Nay,' she said,  
'I loathe it; he had never kindly  
heart,  
Nor ever cared to better his own kind,  
Who first wrote satire, with no pity  
in it.  
But will you hear *my* dream, for I  
had one  
That altogether went to music? Still!  
It awed me.'

Then she told it, having dream'd  
Of that same coast. —

But round the North, a light,  
A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapor,  
lay,  
And ever in it a low musical note  
Swell'd up and died; and, as it swell'd,  
a ridge  
Of breaker issued from the belt, and  
still  
Grew with the growing note, and  
when the note  
Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on  
those cliffs  
Broke, mixt with awful light—the  
same as that  
Living within the belt — whereby she  
saw  
That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs  
no more,  
But huge cathedral fronts of every  
age,  
Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could  
see,  
One after one; and then the great  
ridge drew,  
Lessening to the lessening music, back,  
And past into the belt and swell'd  
again  
Slowly to music. Ever when it broke  
The statues, king, or saint, or founder  
fell;  
Then from the gaps and chasms of  
ruin left  
Came men and women in dark clus-  
ters round,  
Some crying, 'Set them up! they  
shall not fall!'  
And others, 'Let them lie, for they  
have fallen.'  
And still they strove and wrangled;  
and she grieved  
In her strange dream, she knew not  
why, to find

Their wildest wailings never out of  
tune  
With that sweet note; and ever as  
their shrieks  
Ran highest up the gamut, that great  
wave  
Returning, while none mark'd it, on  
the crowd  
Broke, mixt with awful light, and  
show'd their eyes  
Glaring, and passionate looks, and  
swept away  
The men of flesh and blood, and men  
of stone, <sup>230</sup>  
To the waste deeps together.

‘Then I fixt  
My wistful eyes on two fair images,  
Both crown'd with stars and high  
among the stars, —  
The Virgin Mother standing with her  
child  
High up on one of those dark minster-  
fronts —  
Till she began to totter, and the child  
Clung to the mother, and sent out a  
cry  
Which mixt with little Margaret's,  
and I woke,  
And my dream awed me; — well —  
but what are dreams?  
Yours came but from the breaking of  
a glass, <sup>240</sup>  
And mine but from the crying of a  
child.'

‘Child? No!’ said he, ‘but this  
tide's roar, and his,  
Our Boanerges with his threats of doom  
And loud-lung'd Antibabylonian-  
isms —  
Altho' I grant but little music there —  
Went both to make your dream; but  
if there were  
A music harmonizing our wild cries,  
Sphere-music such as that you dream'd  
about,  
Why, that would make our passions  
far too like  
The discords dear to the musician.  
No — <sup>250</sup>  
One shriek of hate would jar all the  
hymns of heaven.  
True devils with no ear, they howl in  
tune  
With nothing but the devil!’

“True” indeed!  
One of our town, but later by an hour  
Here than ourselves, spoke with me  
on the shore;  
While you were running down the  
sands, and made  
The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbe-  
low flap,  
Good man, to please the child. She  
brought strange news.  
Why were you silent when I spoke  
to-night?  
I had set my heart on your forgiving  
him <sup>260</sup>  
Before you knew. We *must* forgive  
the dead.'

‘Dead! who is dead?’

‘The man your eye pursued.  
A little after you had parted with  
him,  
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-d.s  
case.’

‘Dead? he? of heart-disease? what  
heart had he  
To die of? dead!’

‘Ah, dearest, if there be  
A devil in man, there is an angel too,  
And if he did that wrong you charge  
him with,  
His angel broke his heart. But your  
rough voice —  
You spoke so loud — has roused the  
child again. <sup>270</sup>  
Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not  
sleep  
Without her “little birdie”? well,  
then, sleep,  
And I will sing you “birdie.”’

Saying this,  
The woman half turn'd round from  
him she loved,  
Left him one hand, and reaching thro'  
the night  
Her other, found — for it was close  
beside —  
And half-embraced the basket cradle  
head  
With one soft arm, which, like the  
pliant bough  
That moving moves the nest and nest  
ling, sway'd

The cradle, while she sang this baby-song: 280

What does little birdie say  
In her nest at peep of day?  
Let me fly, says little birdie,  
Mother, let me fly away.  
Birdie, rest a little longer,  
Till the little wings are stronger,  
So she rests a little longer,  
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,  
In her bed at peep of day? 290  
Baby says, like little birdie,  
Let me rise and fly away.  
Baby, sleep a little longer,  
Till the little limbs are stronger;  
If she sleeps a little longer,  
Baby too shall fly away.

'She sleeps; let us too, let all evil,  
sleep.

He also sleeps — another sleep than  
ours.

We can do no more wrong; forgive  
him, dear,  
And I shall sleep the sounder!'

Then the man,  
'His deeds yet live, the worst is yet  
to come. 301

Yet let your sleep for this one night  
be sound;

I do forgive him!'

'Thanks, my love,' she said,  
'Your own will be the sweeter' and  
they slept.

# ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

## I

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and  
sweet,

In this wide hall with earth's inven-  
tion stored,

And praise the invisible universal  
Lord,

Who lets once more in peace the  
nations meet,

Where Science, Art, and Labor have  
outpoured

Their myriad horns of plenty at our  
feet.

## II

O silent father of our Kings to be,  
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubi-  
lee,  
For this, for all, we weep our thanks  
to thee!

## III

The world-compelling plan was  
thine, —

And, lo! the long laborious miles  
Of Palace; lo! the giant aisles,  
Rich in model and design.  
Harvest-tool and husbandry,  
Loom and wheel and engineery,  
Secrets of the sullen mine,  
Steel and gold, and corn and wine,  
Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,  
Sunny tokens of the Line,  
Polar marvels, and a feast  
Of wonder, out of West and East,  
And shapes and hues of Art divine!  
All of beauty, all of use,  
That one fair planet can produce,  
Brought from under every star,  
Blown from over every main,  
And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,  
The works of peace with works of  
war.

## IV

Is the goal so far away?  
Far, how far no tongue can say,  
Let us dream our dream to-day.

## V

O ye, the wise who think, the wise  
who reign,  
From growing Commerce loose her  
latest chain,  
And let the fair white-wing'd peace  
maker fly

To happy havens under all the sky,  
And mix the seasons and the golden  
hours;

Till each man find his own in all  
men's good,

And all men work in noble brother-  
hood,

Breaking their mailed fleets and armed  
towers,

And ruling by obeying Nature's  
powers,

And gathering all the fruits of earth  
and crown'd with all her flowers.

## A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

MARCH 7, 1863

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the  
sea,

Alexandra !

Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
But all of us Danes in our welcome of  
thee,

Alexandra !

Welcome her, thunders of fort and of  
fleet !

Welcome her, thundering cheer of the  
street !

Welcome her, all things youthful and  
sweet,

Scatter the blossom under her feet !  
Break, happy land, into earlier flowers !

Make music, O bird, in the new-budded  
bowers !

Blazon your mottoes of blessing and  
prayer !

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is  
ours !

Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare !  
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and  
towers !

Flames, on the windy headland flare !  
Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire !

Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air !  
Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire !

Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and  
higher

Melt into stars for the land's desire !  
Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,

Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the  
strand,

Roar as the sea when he welcomes the  
land,

And welcome her, welcome the land's  
desire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as  
fair,

Blissful bride of a blissful heir,  
Bride of the heir of the kings of the  
sea—

O joy to the people and joy to the  
throne,

Come to us, love us and make us your  
own ;

For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,  
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,

We are each all Dane in our welcome  
of thee,

Alexandra !

## THE GRANDMOTHER

I

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone,  
you say, little Anne ?

Ruddy and white, and strong on his  
legs, he looks like a man.

And Willy's wife has written ; she  
never was over-wise,

Never the wife for Willy ; he would n't  
take my advice.

II

For, Annie, you see, her father was  
not the man to save,

Had n't a head to manage, and drank  
himself into his grave.

Pretty enough, very pretty ! but I was  
against it for one.

Eh ! — but he would n't hear me — and  
Willy, you say, is gone.

III

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the  
flower of the flock ;

Never a man could fling him, for  
Willy stood like a rock.

'Here's a leg for a babe of a week !'  
says Doctor ; and he would be  
bound

There was not his like that year in  
twenty parishes round.

IV

Strong of his hands, and strong on his  
legs, but still of his tongue !

I ought to have gone before him ; I  
wonder he went so young.

I cannot cry for him, Annie ; I have  
not long to stay.

Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for  
he lived far away.

V

Why do you look at me, Annie ? you  
think I am hard and cold ;

But all my children have gone before  
me, I am so old.

I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I  
weep for the rest ;

Only at your age, Annie, I could have  
wept with the best.

VI

For I remember a quarrel I had with  
your father, my dear,



'Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago'

All for a slanderous story, that cost  
me many a tear.  
I mean your grandfather, Annie; it  
cost me a world of woe,  
seventy years ago, my darling, seventy  
years ago.

#### VII

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to  
the place, and I knew right well  
That Jenny had tript in her time; I  
knew, but I would not tell.  
And she to be coming and slandering  
me, the base little liar!  
But the tongue is a fire, as you know,  
my dear, the tongue is a fire.

#### VIII

And the parson made it his text that  
week, and he said likewise  
That a lie which is half a truth is  
ever the blackest of lies,  
That a lie which is all a lie may be  
met and fought with outright,  
But a lie which is part a truth is a  
harder matter to fight.

#### IX

And Willy had not been down to the  
farm for a week and a day;  
And all things look'd half-dead, tho'  
it was the middle of May.  
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what  
Jenny had been!  
But soiling another, Annie, will never  
make oneself clean

#### X

And I cried myself well-nigh blind,  
and all of an evening late  
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and  
stood by the road at the gate.  
The moon like a rick on fire was  
rising over the dale,  
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush  
beside me chirrup't the night-  
ingale.

40

#### XI

All of a sudden he stopt; there past  
by the gate of the farm  
Willy, — he did n't see me, — and  
Jenny hung on his arm.

Out into the road I started, and spoke  
 I scarce knew how ;  
 Ah, there's no fool like the old one —  
 it makes me angry now.

## XII

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd  
 the thing that he meant ;  
 Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking  
 curtsey and went.  
 And I said, 'Let us part ; in a hun-  
 dred years it'll all be the same.  
 You cannot love me at all, if you love  
 not my good name.'

## XIII

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all  
 wet, in the sweet moonshine :  
 'Sweetheart, I love you so well that  
 your good name is mine. 50  
 And what do I care for Jane, let her  
 speak of you well or ill ;  
 But marry me out of hand ; we two  
 shall be happy still.'

## XIV

'Marry you, Willy !' said I, 'but I  
 needs must speak my mind,  
 And I fear you'll listen to tales, be  
 jealous and hard and unkind.'  
 But he turn'd and claspt me in his  
 arms, and answer'd, 'No, love,  
 no ;'  
 Seventy years ago, my darling, sev-  
 enty years ago.

## XV

So Willy and I were wedded. I wore  
 a lilac gown ;  
 And the ringers rang with a will, and  
 he gave the ringers a crown.  
 But the first that ever I bare was dead  
 before he was born ;  
 Shadow and shine is life, little Annie,  
 flower and thorn. 60

## XVI

That was the first time, too, that ever  
 I thought of death.  
 There lay the sweet little body that  
 never had drawn a breath.  
 I had not wept, little Anne, not since  
 I had been a wife ;  
 But I wept like a child that day, for  
 the babe had fought for his life.

## XVII

His dear little face was troubled, as  
 if with anger or pain ;  
 I look'd at the still little body — his  
 trouble had all been in vain.  
 For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see  
 him another morn ;  
 But I wept like a child for the child  
 that was dead before he was  
 born.

## XVIII

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for  
 he seldom said me nay.  
 Kind, like a man, was he ; like a man,  
 too, would have his way ; 70  
 Never jealous — not he. We had  
 many a happy year ;  
 And he died, and I could not weep —  
 my own time seem'd so near.

## XIX

But I wish'd it had been God's will  
 that I, too, then could have  
 died ;  
 I began to be tired a little, and fain  
 had slept at his side.  
 And that was ten years back ; or more,  
 if I don't forget ;  
 But as to the children, Annie, they're  
 all about me yet.

## XX

Pattering over the boards, my Annie  
 who left me at two,  
 Patter she goes, my own little Annie,  
 an Annie like you ;  
 Pattering over the boards, she comes  
 and goes at her will,  
 While Harry is in the five-acre and  
 Charlie ploughing the hill. 80

## XXI

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them  
 too — they sing to their team ;  
 Often they come to the door in a  
 pleasant kind of a dream.  
 They come and sit by my chair, they  
 hover about my bed —  
 I am not always certain if they be  
 alive or dead.

## XXII

And yet I know for a truth there's  
 none of them left alive,

For Harry went at sixty, your father  
at sixty-five;  
And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh  
threescore and ten.  
I knew them all as babies, and now  
they're elderly men.

## XXIII

For mine is a time of peace, it is not  
often I grieve;  
I am oftener sitting at home in my  
father's farm at eve;  
And the neighbors come and laugh  
and gossip, and so do I;  
I find myself often laughing at things  
that have long gone by.

## XXIV

To be sure the preacher says, our  
sins should make us sad;  
But mine is a time of peace, and there  
is Grace to be had;  
And God, not man, is the Judge of us  
all when life shall cease;  
And in this Book, little Annie, the  
message is one of peace.

## XXV

And age is a time of peace, so it be  
free from pain,  
And happy has been my life; but I  
would not live it again.  
I seem to be tired a little, that's all,  
and long for rest;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have  
wept with the best.

## XXVI

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my  
eldest-born, my flower;  
But how can I weep for Willy, he has  
but gone for an hour,—  
Gone for a minute, my son, from this  
room into the next;  
I, too, shall go in a minute. What  
time have I to be vexed?

## XXVII

And Willy's wife has written, she  
never was over-wise.  
Get me my glasses, Annie; thank  
God that I keep my eyes.  
There is but a trifle left you, when I  
shall have past away.  
But stay with the old woman now;  
you cannot have long to stay.

## NORTHERN FARMER

## OLD STYLE

## I

WHEER 'asta bein' saw long and meä  
liggin' 'ere aloin' ?  
Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse;  
whoy, Doctor 'sabein an' agoän,  
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle,  
but I beänt a fool;  
Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a gawin'  
to break my rule.

## II

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says  
what's nawways true;  
Naw soort o' koind o' use to säy the  
things that a do.  
I've 'ed my point o' aile ivry noight  
sin' I bein' 'ere.  
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-  
noight for foorty year.

## III

Parson s a bein' loikewise, an' a sit-  
tin' 'ere o' my bed.  
'The Amoighty 's a taäkin o' you<sup>1</sup> to  
'issén, my friend,' a said,  
An' a tow'd ma my sins, an' 's toithe  
were due, an' I gied it in  
hond;  
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done  
boy the lond.

## IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot  
sa mooch to larn.  
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy  
Marris's barne.  
Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi'  
Squoire an' choorch an' staitte,  
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver  
agin the raäte.

## V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor  
moy Sally wur deäid,  
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike  
a buzzard-clock<sup>2</sup> ower my 'eäid,  
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd  
but I thowt a 'ad summut to  
säy,  
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a  
said, an' I coom'd awaäy.

<sup>1</sup> ou as in hour.<sup>2</sup> Cockchafer.



## VI

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she  
laäid it to meä.  
Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a  
bad un, sheä.  
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass,  
tha mun understond;  
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done  
boy the lond.

## VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a  
says it cäsy an' freeä:  
'The Amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to  
'issén, my friend,' says 'eä.  
I weänt säy men be loärs, thaw sum-  
mun said it in 'aäste;  
But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weäik, an'  
I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

## VIII

D' ya moind the waäste, my lass?  
naw, naw, tha was not born  
then;  
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'cärd  
'um mysén;  
Moäst loike a butter-bump,<sup>1</sup> fur I 'cärd  
'um about an' about,  
But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an'  
raäved an' rembled 'um out.

## IX

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer  
a-laäid of 'is faäce  
Down i' the woäld 'emies<sup>2</sup> afoor I  
coom'd to the plaäce.  
Noäks or Thimbleby — toäner<sup>3</sup> 'ed  
shot 'um as deäid as a nääil.  
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize —  
but git ma my aäle.

## X

Dubbut looök at the waäste; theer  
warn't not feäd for a cow;  
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an'  
looök at it now —  
Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now  
theer's lots o' feäd,  
Fourscoor<sup>4</sup> yows upon it, an' some on  
it down i' seeäd.<sup>5</sup>

## XI

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd  
to 'a stubb'd it at fall,

<sup>1</sup> Bittern. <sup>2</sup> Anemones. <sup>3</sup> One or other.

<sup>4</sup> ou as in *hour*.

<sup>5</sup> Clover.

Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd  
plow thruff it an' all,  
If Godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut  
let ma aloän, —  
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haätere o'  
Squoire's, an' lond o' my oän.

## XII

Do Godamoighty know what a 's do-  
ing a-taäkin' o' meä?  
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an'  
yonder a peä;  
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all —  
a' dear, a' deärl!  
And I 'a managed for Squoire coom  
Michaelmas thutty year.

## XIII

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant  
not a 'aäpoth o' sense,  
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins — a  
niver mended a fence;  
But Godamoighty a moost taäke meä  
an' taäke ma now,  
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurn-  
aby hoäms to plow!

## XIV

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they  
seeäs ma a passin' boy,  
Says to thessén, naw doubt, 'What a  
man a beä sewer-loyl'  
Fur they knaws what I beänt to Squoire  
sin' fust a coom'd to the 'All;  
I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done  
moy duty boy hall.

## XV

Squoire 's i' Lunnon, an' surmun I  
reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,  
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä  
thot muddles ma quoit;  
Sartin-sewer I beä thot a weänt niver  
give it to Joänes,  
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins — a niver  
rembles the stoäns.

## XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä may-  
hap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm  
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds  
wi' the divil's oän teäm.  
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife  
they says is sweet,  
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I  
couldn abeär to see it.

## XVII

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn  
bring ma thee aile ?  
Doctor's a<sup>1</sup> toittler, lass, an a's hallus  
i' the owd taile ;  
I weaint breik rules fur Doctor, a  
knaaws naw moor nor a floy ;  
Git ma my aile, I tell tha, an' if I mun  
doy I mun doy.

## NORTHERN FARMER

## NEW STYLE

## I

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as  
they canters awaay ?  
Proputt, proputt, proputt — that's  
what I 'ears 'em saay.  
Proputt, proputt, proputt — Sam,  
thou's an ass for tly pains ;  
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs,  
nor in all thy brains.

## II

WOÄ — theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha,  
Sam : yon's parson's ouse —  
Doesn't thou know that a man mun be  
eithar a man or a mouse ?  
Time to think on it then ; for thou'll  
be twenty to weäik.<sup>1</sup>  
Proputt, proputt — woä then, woä  
— let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

## III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän  
a-talkin' o' thee ;  
Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she  
beän a-tellin' it me.  
Thou'll not marry for munny — thou's  
sweet upo' parson's lass —  
Noä — thou'll marry for luvv — an' we  
boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

## IV

Seeä'd her to-daäy goä by — Saäint's-  
daäy — they was ringing the  
bells.  
She's a beauty, thou thinks — an' soä  
is scoors o' gells,  
Them as 'as munny an' all — wot's a  
beauty ? — the flower as blows.  
But proputt, proputt sticks, an' prop-  
utt, proputt grows.

<sup>1</sup> This week.

## V

Do'ant be stunt ;<sup>1</sup> taäke time. I  
knaaws what maäkes tha sa mad.  
Warn't I craäz'd fur the lasses mysén  
when I wur a lad ?  
But I know'd a Quaäker feller as  
often 'as tow'd ma this :  
'Doänt thou marry for munny, but  
goä wheer munny is !'

## VI

An' I went wheer munny war ; an  
thy muther coom to 'and,  
Wi' lots o' munny laa'd by, an' a nice-  
tish bit o' land.  
Maäybe she warn't a beauty — I niver  
giv it a thowt —  
But warn't she as good to cuddle an'  
kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt ?

## VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt  
'a nowt when 'e's deäd  
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut,  
and addle<sup>2</sup> her breäid.  
Why ? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an'  
weänt niver got hissén clear.  
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor  
'e coom'd to the shere.

## VIII

An' thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi'  
lots o' Varsity debt,  
Stook to his taafl they did, an' 'e 'ant  
got shut on 'em yet.  
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi'  
noän to lend 'im a shove,  
Woorse nor a far-welter'd<sup>3</sup> yowe ; fur,  
Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

## IX

Luvv ? what's luvv ? thou can luvv  
thy lass an' 'er munny too,  
Maäkin' 'em goä together, as they 'vc  
good right to do.  
Couldn't I luvv thy muther by cause o'  
'er munny laa'd by ?  
Naäy — fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight  
moor fur it ; reäson why.

## X

Ay, an' thy muther says thou wants to  
marry the lass,

<sup>1</sup> Obstinate.<sup>2</sup> Earn.<sup>3</sup> Or, fow-welter'd, — said of a sheep lying  
on its back in the furrow.

Cooms of a gentleman burn; an' we  
boäth on us thinks tha an  
ass.

Woä then, propuppy, wiltha? — an ass  
as near as mays nowt<sup>1</sup> —

Woä then, wiltha? dangtha! — the  
bees is as fell as ow't.<sup>2</sup>

## XI

Break me a bit o' the esh for his 'cild,  
lad, out o' the fence!

Gentleman burn! what's gentleman  
burn? is it shillins an' pence?

Propuppy, propuppy's ivrything 'ere,  
an', Sammy, I'm blest

If it is n't the saime oop yonder, fur  
them as 'as it's the best.

## XII

Tis'n them as 'as munny as break's  
into 'ouses an' steäls,

Them as 'as coäts to their backs an'  
taäkes their regular meäls.

Noä, but it's them as niver knaws  
wheer a meä'l's to be 'ad.

Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the  
poor in a loomp is bad.

## XIII

Them or thir feythurs, tha sees, mun  
'a beä'n a laüzy lot,

Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin'  
whiniver munny was got.

Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways  
'is munny was 'id

But 'e tued an' moil'd issen deä'd, an'  
'e died a good un, 'e did.

## XIV

Looök thou theer wheer Wigglesby  
beck cooms out by the 'ill!

Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I  
runs oop to the mill;

An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that  
thou'll live to see;

And if thou marries a good un I'll  
leäve the land to thee.

## XV

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby  
I meäns to stick;

But if thou marries a bad un, I'll  
leäve the land to Dick. —

<sup>1</sup> Makes nothing.

<sup>2</sup> The flies are as fierce as anything.

Coom oop, propuppy, propuppy — that's  
what I 'ears 'im saüy —

Propuppy, propuppy, propuppy — canter  
an' canter awaüy.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTE-  
RETZ

ALL along the valley, stream that  
flashest white,

Deepening thy voice with the deepen-  
ing of the night,

All along the valley, where thy waters  
flow,

I walk'd with one I loved two and  
thirty years ago.

All along the valley, while I walk'd  
to-day,

The two and thirty years were a mist  
that rolls away;

For all along the valley, down thy  
rocky bed,

Thy living voice to me was as the  
voice of the dead,

And all along the valley, by rock and  
cave and tree,

The voice of the dead was a living  
voice to me.

## THE FLOWER

ONCE in a golden hour  
I cast to earth a seed.  
Up there came a flower,  
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went  
Thro' my garden-bower,  
And muttering discontent  
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall  
It wore a crown of light,  
But thieves from o'er the wall  
Stole the seed by night;

Sow'd it far and wide  
By every town and tower,  
Till all the people cried,  
'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable:  
He that runs may read.  
Most can raise the flowers now  
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,  
And some are poor indeed;  
And now again the people  
Call it but a weed.

### REQUIESCAT

FAIR is her cottage in its place,  
Where yon broad water sweetly,  
slowly glides.  
It sees itself from thatch to base  
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah, how soon to  
die!

Her quiet dream of life this hour  
may cease.

Her peaceful being slowly passes by  
To some more perfect peace.

### THE SAILOR BOY

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,  
Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,  
And reach'd the ship and caught the  
rope,  
And whistled to the morning star

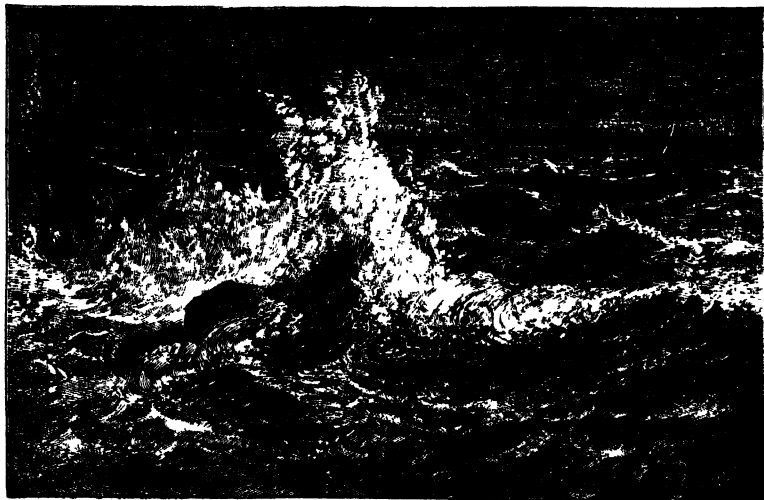
And while he whistled long and loud  
He heard a fierce mermaid cry,  
'O boy, tho' thou art young and  
proud,  
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

'The sands and yeasty surges mix  
In caves about the dreary bay,  
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,  
And in thy heart the scrawl shall  
play.'

'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure  
To those that stay and those that  
roam,  
But I will nevermore endure  
'To sit with empty hands at home.

'My mother clings about my neck,  
My sisters crying, "Stay for  
shame;"  
My father raves of death and wreck, —  
They are all to blame, they are all  
to blame.

'God help me! save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea,  
A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me.'



"God help me! save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea!"

## THE ISLET

'WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we  
go,  
For a score of sweet little summers or  
so?'

The sweet little wife of the singer  
said,

On the day that follow'd the day she  
was wed,

'Whither, O whither, love, shall we  
go?'

And the singer shaking his curly  
head

Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys  
There at his right with a sudden

crash,  
Singing, 'And shall it be over the  
seas

With a crew that is neither rude nor  
rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,  
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd?

With a satin sail of a ruby glow,  
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I

know,  
A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;

Waves on a diamond shingle dash,  
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,

Fairly-delicate palaces shine  
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,

And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd  
With many a rivulet high against the

sun  
The facets of the glorious mountain

flash  
Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

'Thither, O thither, love, let us go.'

'No, no, no!

For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,  
There is but one bird with a musical

throat,  
And his compass is but of a single

note,  
That it makes one weary to hear.'

'Mock me not! mock me not! love,  
let us go.'

'No, love, no.

For the bud ever breaks into bloom  
on the tree,

And a storm never wakes on the lonely  
sea,

And a worm is there in the lonely  
wood,

That pierces the liver and blackens  
the blood,

And makes it a sorrow to be.'

## A DEDICATION

DEAR, near and true, — no truer Time  
himself

Can prove you, tho' he make you  
evermore

Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of  
life

Shoots to the fall, — take this and  
pray that he

Who wrote it, honoring your sweet  
faith in him,

May trust himself; and after praise  
and scorn,

As one who feels the immeasurable  
world,

Attain the wise indifference of the  
wise;

And after autumn past — if left to  
pass

His autumn into seeming-leafless  
days —

Draw toward the long frost and long-  
est night,

Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the  
fruit

Which in our winter woodland looks  
a flower.<sup>1</sup>

## EXPERIMENTS

## BOÁDICÉA

WHILE about the shore of Mona those  
Neronian legionaries

Burnt and broke the grove and altar  
of the Druid and Druidess,

Far in the East Boádicéa, standing  
loftly charioted,

Mad and maddening all that heard  
her in her fierce volubility,

Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near  
the colony Cánulodúne,

Yell'd and shriek'd between her  
daughters o'er a wild confed-  
eracy.

<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*).

'They that scorn the tribes and call  
us Britain's barbarous popu-  
lances,

Did they hear me, would they listen,  
did they pity me supplicating?

Shall I heed them in their anguish?  
shall I brook to be supplicated?

Hear, Icenian, Catiuchlanian, hear,  
Coritanian, Trinobant! 10

Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak  
and talon annihilate us?

Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave  
it gorily quivering?

Bark an answer, Britain's raven!  
bark and blacken innumerable,

Blacken round the Roman carrion,  
make the carcase a skeleton,

Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin,  
from the wilderness, wallow in  
it,

Till the face of Bel be brighten'd,  
Taranis be propitiated.

Lo their colony half-defended! lo  
their colony, Cámulodúne!

There the horde of Roman robbers  
mock at a barbarous adversary.

There the hive of Roman liars wor-  
ship an emperor-idiot.

Such is Rome, and this her deity;  
hear it, Spirit of Cássivëlaun!

'Hear it, Gods! the Gods have  
heard it, O Icenian, O Corita-  
nian! 21

Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd,  
Catiuchlanian, Trinobant.

These have told us all their anger in  
miraculous utterances,

Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a  
murmur heard ætrially,

Phantom sound of blows descending,  
moan of an enemy massacred,

Phantom wail of women and children,  
multitudinous agonies.

Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling  
phantom bodies of horses and  
men;

Then a phantom colony smoulder'd  
on the reflux estuary;

Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly  
giddily tottering —

There was one who watch'd and told  
me — down their statue of Vic-  
tory fell. 30

Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo  
the colony Cámulodúne,

Shall we teach it a Roman lesson?  
shall we care to be pitiful?

Shall we deal with it as an infant?  
shall we dandle it amorously?

'Hear, Icenian, Catiuchlanian,  
hear, Coritanian, Trinobant!

While I roved about the forest, long  
and bitterly meditating,

There I heard them in the darkness,  
at the mystical ceremony;

Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang  
the terrible prophetesses:

"Fear not, isle of blowing woodland,  
isle of silvery parapets!

Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee,  
tho' the gathering enemy nar-  
row thee,

Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle,  
thou shalt be the mighty one  
yet! 40

Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine  
the deeds to be celebrated,

Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light  
and shadow illimitable,

Thine the lands of lasting summer,  
many-blossoming Paradises,

Thine the North and thine the South  
and thine the battle-thunder of  
God."

So they chanted: how shall Britain  
light upon auguries happier?

So they chanted in the darkness, and  
there cometh a victory now.

'Hear, Icenian, Catiuchlanian,  
hear, Coritanian, Trinobant!

Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me  
the lover of liberty,

Me they seized and me they tortured,  
me they lash'd and humiliated,

Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine  
of ruffian violators! 50

See, they sit, they hide their faces,  
miserable in ignominy!

Wherefore in me burns an anger, not  
by blood to be satiated.

Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the  
colony Cámulodúne!

There they ruled, and thence they  
wasted all the flourishing terri-  
tory,

Thither at their will they haled the  
yellow-ringleted Britoness —

Bloodily fall the battle-axe  
unexhausted, inexorable.

Shout, Icenian, Catiuchlanian, shout,  
 Coritanian, Trinobant,  
 Till the victim hear within and yearn  
 to hurry precipitously,  
 Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind,  
 like the smoke in a hurricane  
 whirl'd.  
 Lo the colony, there they rioted in the  
 city of Cúnobeline! 60  
 There they drank in cups of emerald,  
 there at tables of ebony lay,  
 Rolling on their purple couches in their  
 tender effeminacy.  
 There they dwelt and there they rioted;  
 there — there — they dwell no  
 more.  
 Burst the gates, and burn the palaces,  
 break the works of the statuary,  
 Take the hoary Roman head and shat-  
 ter it, hold it abominable,  
 Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his  
 lust and voluptuousness,  
 Lash the maiden into swooning, me  
 they lash'd and humiliated,  
 Chop the breasts from off the mother,  
 dash the brains of the little one  
 out,  
 Up, my Britons! on, my chariot! on,  
 my chargers, trample them  
 under us!

So the Queen Boëdicéa, standing  
 loftily charioted, 70  
 Brandishing in her hand a dart and  
 rolling glances lioness-like,  
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daugh-  
 ters in her fierce volubility.  
 Till her people all around the royal  
 chariot agitated,  
 Madly dash'd the darts together, writh-  
 ing barbarous lineaments,  
 Made the noise of frosty woodlands,  
 when they shiver in January,  
 Roar'd as when the roaring breakers  
 boom and blanch on the preci-  
 pices,  
 Yell'd as when the winds of winter  
 tear an oak on a promontory.  
 So the silent colony, hearing her tumultu-  
 ous adversaries  
 Clash the darts and on the buckler beat  
 with rapid unanimous hand,  
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all  
 her pitiless avarice, 80  
 Till she felt the heart within her fall  
 and flutter tremulously,

Then her pulses at the clamoring of  
 her enemy fainted away.  
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyr-  
 anny tyranny buds.  
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter,  
 multitudinous agonies.  
 Perish'd many a maid and matron,  
 many a valorous legionary,  
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel, Lon-  
 don, Verulam, Cúmulodúne.

## IN QUANTITY

(HEXAMETERS AND PENTAMETERS)

## ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

THESE lame hexameters the strong-  
 wing'd music of Homer!  
 No — but a most burlesque barba-  
 rous experiment.  
 When was a harsher sound ever heard,  
 ye Muses, in England?  
 When did a frog coarser croak upon  
 our Helicon?  
 Hexameters no worse than daring Ger-  
 many gave us,  
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous  
 hexameters.

## (ALCAICS)

## MILTON

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of har-  
 monies,  
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,  
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
 Milton, a name to resound for  
 ages;  
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armo-  
 ries,  
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean  
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset!  
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmur-  
 ing,  
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
 Where some refulgent sunset of India  
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-  
 woods  
 Whisper in odorous heights of  
 even.

## (HENDECASYLLABICS)

'O YOU CHORUS OF INDOLENT REVIEWERS'

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,  
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
All composed in a metre of Catullus,  
All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
Like the skater on ice that hardly bears  
him,  
Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.  
Should I flounder awhile without a  
tumble  
Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
They should speak to me not without  
a welcome,  
All that chorus of indolent reviewers.  
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to  
tumble,  
So fantastical is the dainty metre.  
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor  
believe me  
Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.  
O blatant Magazines, regard me  
rather —  
Since I blush to belaud myself a moment —  
As some rare little rose, a piece of in-  
most  
Horticultural art, or half coquette-like  
Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF  
THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE

[ILIAD, VIII. 542-561]

So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd  
applause;  
Then loosed their sweating horses from  
the yoke,  
And each beside his chariot bound his  
own;  
And oxen from the city, and goodly  
sheep  
In haste they drove, and honey hearted  
wine  
And bread from out the houses  
brought, and heap'd

Their firewood, and the winds from  
off the plain  
Roll'd the rich vapor far into the  
heaven.  
And these all night upon the bridge<sup>1</sup>  
of war  
Sat glorying; many a fire before them  
blazed.  
As when in heaven the stars about the  
moon  
Look beautiful, when all the winds  
are laid,  
And every height comes out, and jut-  
ting peak  
And valley, and the immeasurable  
heavens  
Break open to their highest, and all  
the stars  
Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in  
his heart;  
So many a fire between the ships and  
stream  
Of Xanthus blazed before the towers  
of Troy,  
A thousand on the plain; and close by  
each  
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;  
And eating hoary grain and pulse the  
steeds,  
Fixt by their cars, waited the golden  
dawn.

## THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY, 1852

My Lords, we heard you speak: you  
told us all  
That England's honest censure went  
too far,  
That our free press should cease to  
brawl,  
Not sting the fiery Frenchman into  
war.  
It was our ancient privilege, my Lords  
To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing,  
into words.

We love not this French God, the child  
of hell,  
Wild War, who breaks the converse  
of the wise;  
But though we love kind Peace so  
well,  
We dare not even by silence sanction  
lies.

<sup>1</sup> Or, ridge.



It might be safe our censures to with-  
draw,  
And yet, my Lords, not well; there is  
a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak  
free,  
Tho' all the storm of Europe on us  
break.

No little German state are we,  
But the one voice in Europe; we  
*must* speak,  
That if to-night our greatness were  
struck dead,  
There might be left some record of  
the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be  
bold.

Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant  
o'er.

Better the waste Atlantic roll'd  
On her and us and ours for evermore.  
What! have we fought for Freedom  
from our prime,  
At last to dodge and palter with a  
public crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never  
fear'd.

From our first Charles by force we  
wrung our claims.

Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,  
We flung the burthen of the second  
James.

I say, we *never* fear'd! and as for  
these,

We broke them on the land, we drove  
them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the  
people muse

In doubt if you be of our Barons'  
breed —

Were those your sires who fought at  
Lewes?

Is this the manly strain of Runny-  
mede?

O fallen nobility that, overawed,  
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of  
this monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here were  
sin,

Not ours the fault if we have feeble  
hosts —

If easy patrons of their kin  
Have left the last free race with  
naked coasts!

They knew the precious things they  
had to guard;

For us, we will not spare the tyrant  
one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester  
may bawl,  
What England was, shall her truc  
sons forget?

We are not cotton-spinners all,  
But some love England and her  
honor yet.

And these in our Thermopylæ shall  
stand,

And hold against the world this honor  
of the land.

A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL  
HIGHNESS MARIE ALEXAN-  
DROVNA, DUCHESS OF EDIN-  
BURGH

MARCH 7, 1874

I

THE Son of him with whom we strove  
for power —

Whose will is lord thro' all his world-  
domain —

Who made the serf a man, and burst  
his chain —

Has given our Prince his own imperial  
Flower,

Alexandrovna.

And welcome, Russian flower, a peo-  
ple's pride,

To Britain, when her flowers begin  
to blow!

From love to love, from home to  
home you go,

From mother unto mother, stately  
bride,

Marie Alexandrovna!

II

The golden news along the steppes is  
blown,

And at thy name the Tartar tents  
are stirr'd;

Elburz and all the Caucasus have  
heard;

And all the sultry palms of India  
known,

Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea  
On capes of Afric as on cliffs of  
Kent,

The Maoris and that Isle of Conti-  
nent,  
And loyal pines of Canada murmur  
thee,

Marie Alexandrovna !

### III

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty  
life !—

Yet Harold's England fell to Norman  
swords ;

Yet thine own land has bow'd to  
Tartar hordes

Since English Harold gave its throne  
a wife,

Alexandrovna !

For thrones and peoples are as waifs  
that swing,

And float or fall, in endless ebb and  
flow ;

But who love best have best the  
grace to know

That Love by right divine is deathless  
king,

Marie Alexandrovna !

### IV

And Love has led thee to the stranger  
land,

Where men are bold and strongly  
say their say ;—

See, empire upon empire smiles to-  
day,

As thou with thy young lover hand in  
hand,

Alexandrovna !

So now thy fuller life is in the west,  
Whose hand at home was gracious  
to thy poor ;

Thy name was blest within the nar-  
row door ;

Here also, Marie, shall thy name be  
blest,

Marie Alexandrovna !

### V

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame  
again ?

Or at thy coming, Princess, every-  
where,

The blue heaven break, and some  
diviner air

Breathe thro' the world and change  
the hearts of men,

Alexandrovna ?

But hearts that change not, love that  
cannot cease,

And peace be yours, the peace of  
soul in soul !

And howsoever this wild world may  
roll,

Between your peoples truth and man-  
ful peace,

Alfred — Alexandrovna !

## IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINS- TON

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,

Within was weeping for thee ;

Shadows of three dead men

Walk'd in the walks with me,

Shadows of three dead men, and  
thou wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods,

The Master was far away ;

Nightingales warbled and sang

Of a passion that lasts but a day ;

Still in the house in his coffin the  
Prince of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known

In courtesy like to thee ;

Two dead men have I loved

With a love that ever will be ;

Three dead men have I loved, and  
thou art last of the three.

## CHILD SONGS

### I

#### THE CITY CHILD

DAINTY little maiden, whither would  
you wander ?

Whither from this pretty home, the  
home where mother dwells ?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty  
little maiden,

'All among the gardens, auriculas,  
anemones,

Roses and lilies and Canterbury  
bells.'

Dainty little maiden, whither would  
you wander?

Whither from this pretty house,  
this city-house of ours?  
'Far and far away,' said the dainty  
little maiden,  
'All among the meadows, the clover  
and the clematis,  
Daisies and kingcups and honey-  
suckle-flowers.'

## II

## MINNIE AND WINNIE

MINNIE and Winnie  
Slept in a shell.  
Sleep, little ladies!  
And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,  
Silver without;  
Sounds of the great sea  
Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies!  
Wake not soon!  
Echo on echo  
Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars  
Peep'd into the shell.  
'What are they dreaming of?  
Who can tell?'

Started a green linnet  
Out of the croft;  
Wake, little ladies!  
The sun is aloft!

## THE SPITEFUL LETTER

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,  
And with it a spiteful letter.  
My name in song has done him much  
wrong,  
For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,  
If men neglect your pages?  
I think not much of yours or of mine,  
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of  
the times!

Are mine for the moment stronger?

Yet hate me not, but abide your lot;  
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as brief;  
What room is left for a hater?  
Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener  
leaf,  
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I — is that your cry?  
And men will live to see it.  
Well — if it be so — so it is, you know;  
And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,  
But this is the time of hollies.  
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,  
How I hate the spites and the follies!

## LITERARY SQUABBLES

Alas! God! the petty fools of rhyme  
That shrink and sweat in pigmy wars  
Before the stony face of Time,  
And look'd at by the silent stars;

Who hate each other for a song,  
And do their little best to bite  
And pinch their brethren in the throng,  
And scratch the very dead for spite;

And strain to make an inch of room  
For their sweet selves, and cannot  
hear  
The sullen Lethe rolling doom  
On them and theirs and all things  
here;

When one small touch of Charity  
Could lift them nearer Godlike state  
Than if the crowded Orb should cry  
Like those who cried Diana great.

And I too talk, and lose the touch  
I talk of. Surely, after all,  
The noblest answer unto such  
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

## THE VICTIM

## I

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,  
A famine after laid them low;  
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,  
For on them brake the sudden foe;

So thick they died the people cried,  
 'The Gods are moved against the  
 land.'

The Priest in horror about his altar  
 To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:  
 'Help us from famine  
 And plague and strife!  
 What would you have of us?  
 Human life?  
 Were it our nearest,  
 Were it our dearest, —  
 Answer, O answer! —  
 We give you his life.'

## II

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,  
 And cattle died, and deer in wood,  
 And bird in air, and fishes turn'd  
 And whiten'd all the rolling flood;  
 And dead men lay all over the way,  
 Or down in a furrow scathed with  
 flame;  
 And ever and aye the Priesthood  
 moan'd,  
 Till at last it seem'd that an answer  
 came:

'The King is happy  
 In child and wife;  
 Take you his dearest,  
 Give us a life.'

## III

The Priest went out by heath and  
 hill;  
 The King was hunting in the wild;  
 They found the mother sitting still;  
 She cast her arms about the child.  
 The child was only eight summers old,  
 His beauty still with his years in-  
 creased,  
 His face was ruddy, his hair was gold;  
 He seem'd a victim due to the priest.  
 The Priest beheld him,  
 And cried with joy,  
 'The Gods have answer'd;  
 We give them the boy.'

## IV

The King return'd from out the wild,  
 He bore but little game in hand;  
 The mother said, 'They have taken  
 the child  
 To spill his blood and heal the land.  
 The land is sick, the people diseased,  
 And blight and famine on all the  
 lea;

The holy Gods, they must be appeased,  
 So I pray you tell the truth to me.  
 They have taken our son,  
 They will have his life.  
 Is *he* your dearest?  
 Or I, the wife?'

## V

The King bent low, with hand on  
 brow,  
 He stay'd his arms upon his knee:  
 'O wife, what use to answer now?  
 For now the Priest has judged for  
 me.'  
 The King was shaken with holy fear;  
 'The Gods,' he said, 'would have  
 chosen well;  
 Yet both are near, and both are dear,  
 And which the dearest I cannot  
 tell!'  
 But the Priest was happy,  
 His victim won:  
 'We have his dearest,  
 His only son!'

## VI

The rites prepared, the victim bared,  
 The knife uprising toward the blow,  
 To the altar-stone she sprang alone:  
 'Me, not my darling, no!'  
 He caught her away with a sudden  
 cry;  
 Suddenly from him brake his wife,  
 And shrieking, 'I am his dearest, I —  
 I am his dearest!' rush'd on the  
 knife.  
 And the Priest was happy:  
 'O Father Odin,  
 We give you a life.  
 Which was his nearest?  
 Who was his dearest?  
 The Gods have answer'd;  
 We give them the wife!'

## WAGES

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator,  
 glory of song.  
 Paid with a voice flying by to be lost  
 on an endless sea —  
 Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle,  
 to right the wrong —  
 Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no  
 lover of glory she;  
 Give her the glory of going on, and  
 still to be.

The wages of sin is death : if the  
wages of Virtue be dust,  
Would she have heart to endure for  
the life of the worm and the  
fly ?

She desires no isles of the blest, no  
quiet seats of the just,  
To rest in a golden grove, or to  
bask in a summer sky ;  
Give her the wages of going on, and  
not to die.

### THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas,  
the hills and the plains, —  
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of  
Him who reigns ?

Is not the Vision He, tho' He be not  
that which He seems ?  
Dreams are true while they last, and  
do we not live in dreams ?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of  
body and limb,  
Are they not sign and symbol of thy  
division from Him ?

Dark is the world to thee ; thyself art  
the reason why,  
For is He not all but thou, that hast  
power to feel ' I am I ' ?

Glory about thee, without thee ; and  
thou fulfillest thy doom,  
Making Him broken gleams and a  
stifled splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,  
and Spirit with Spirit can  
meet —

Closer is He than breathing, and  
nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise ; O Soul, and  
let us rejoice,  
For if He thunder by law the thun-  
der is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some ; no God at all,  
says the fool,  
For all we have power to see is a  
straight staff bent in a pool ;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and  
the eye of man cannot see ;  
But if we could see and hear, this  
Vision — were it not He ?

### THE VOICE AND THE PEAK

#### I

THE voice and the Peak  
Far over summit and lawn,  
The lone glow and long roar  
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones  
of dawn !

#### II

All night have I heard the voice  
Rave over the rocky bar,  
But thou wert silent in heaven,  
Above thee glided the star.

#### III

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,  
That standest high above all ?  
' I am the voice of the Peak,  
I roar and rave, for I fall.

#### IV

' A thousand voices go  
To North, South, East, and West ;  
They leave the heights and are  
troubled,  
And moan and sink to their rest.

#### V

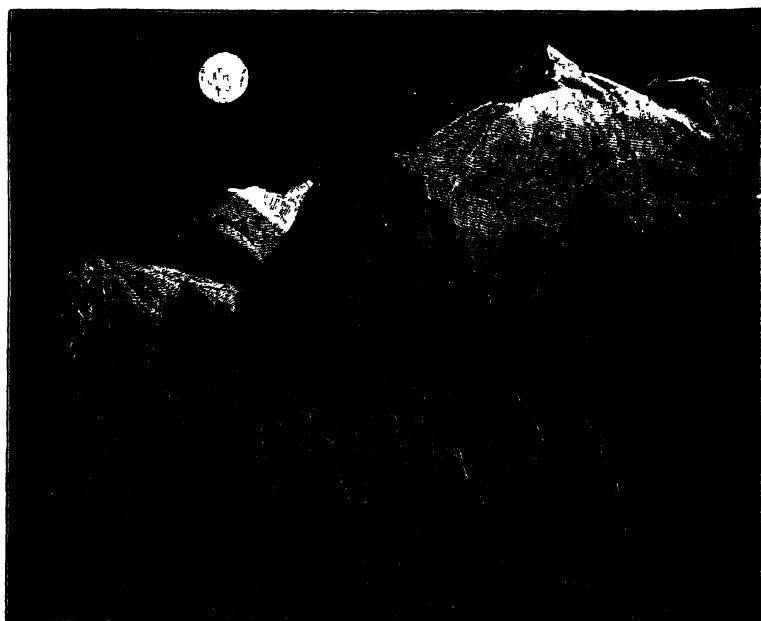
' The fields are fair beside them,  
The chestnut towers in his bloom ;  
But they — they feel the desire of the  
deep —  
Fall, and follow their doom.

#### VI

' The deep has power on the height,  
And the height has power on the  
deep ;  
They are raised for ever and ever,  
And sink again into sleep.'

#### VII

Not raised for ever and ever,  
But when their cycle is o'er,  
The valley, the voice, the peak, the  
star  
Pass, and are found no more.



'Hast thou no voice, O Peak'

VIII

The Peak is high and flush'd  
At his highest with sunrise fire;  
The Peak is high, and the stars are high,  
And the thought of a man is higher.

IX

A deep below the deep,  
And a height beyond the height!  
Our hearing is not hearing,  
And our seeing is not sight.

X

The voice and the Peak  
Far into heaven withdrawn,  
The lone glow and long roar  
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones  
of dawn!

'FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED  
WALL'

FLOWER in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,

I hold you here, root and all, in my  
hand,  
Little flower — but if I could under-  
stand  
What you are, root and all, and all in  
all,  
I should know what God and man is.

LUCRETIVS

LUCILLA, wedded to Lucretius, found  
Her master cold; for when the morn-  
ing flush  
Of passion and the first embrace had  
died  
Between them, tho' he loved her none  
the less,  
Yet often when the woman heard his  
foot  
Return from pacings in the field, and  
ran  
To greet him with a kiss, the master  
took

Small notice, or austere, for — his  
 mind  
 Half buried in some weightier argu-  
 ment,  
 Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise  
 And long roll of the hexameter — he  
 past<sup>11</sup>  
 To turn and ponder those three hun-  
 dred scrolls  
 Left by the Teacher, whom he held  
 divine.  
 She brook'd it not, but wrathful, pet-  
 ulant,  
 Dreaming some rival, sought and  
 found a witch  
 Who brew'd the philtre which had  
 power, they said,  
 To lead an errant passion home again.  
 And this, at times, she mingled with  
 his drink,  
 And this destroy'd him; for the wicked  
 broth  
 Confused the chemic labor of the  
 blood,<sup>20</sup>  
 And tickling the brute brain within  
 the man's  
 Made havoc among those tender cells,  
 and check'd  
 His power to shape. He loathed him-  
 self, and once  
 After a tempest woke upon a morn  
 That mock'd him with returning calm,  
 and cried:

'Storm in the night! for thrice I  
 heard the rain  
 Rushing; and once the flash of a  
 thunderbolt —  
 Methought I never saw so fierce a  
 fork —  
 Struck out the streaming mountain-  
 side, and show'd  
 A riotous confluence of watercourses  
 Blanching and billowing in a hollow  
 of it,<sup>31</sup>  
 Where all but yester-eve was dusty-  
 dry.

'Storm, and what dreams, ye holy  
 Gods, what dreams!  
 For thrice I waken'd after dreams.  
 Perchance  
 We do but recollect the dreams that  
 come  
 Just ere the waking. Terrible: for it  
 seem'd

A void was made in Nature; all be-  
 bonds  
 Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-  
 streams  
 And torrents of her myriad universe,  
 Ruining along the illimitable inane,<sup>40</sup>  
 Fly on to clash together again, and  
 make  
 Another and another frame of things  
 For ever. That was mine, my dream.  
 I knew it —  
 Of and belonging to me, as the dog  
 With inward yelp and restless forefoot  
 plies  
 His function of the woodland; but the  
 next!  
 I thought that all the blood by Sylla  
 shed  
 Came driving rainlike down again on  
 earth,  
 And where it dash'd the reddening  
 meadow, sprang  
 No dragon warriors from Cadmean  
 teeth,<sup>50</sup>  
 For these I thought my dream would  
 show to me,  
 But girls, Hetairai, curious in their  
 art,  
 Hired animalisms, vile as those that  
 made  
 The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies  
 worse  
 Than aught they fable of the quiet  
 Gods.  
 And hands they mixt, and yell'd and  
 round me drove  
 In narrowing circles till I yell'd again  
 Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and  
 saw —  
 Was it the first beam of my latest day?

'Then, then, from utter gloom stood  
 out the breasts,<sup>60</sup>  
 The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly  
 a sword  
 Now over and now under, now direct,  
 Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down  
 shamed  
 At all that beauty; and as I stared, a  
 fire,  
 The fire that left a roofless Ilion,  
 Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that  
 I woke.

'Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,  
 thine,

Because I would not one of thine own  
 doves,  
 Not even a rose, were offer'd to thee ?  
 thine,  
 Forgetful how my rich procœmion  
 makes <sup>70</sup>  
 Thy glory fly along the Italian field,  
 In lays that will outlast thy deity ?

'Deity ? nay, thy worshippers. My  
 tongue  
 Trips, or I speak profanely. Which  
 of these  
 Angers thee most, or angers thee at  
 all ?  
 Not if thou be'st of those who, far  
 aloof  
 From envy, hate and pity, and spite  
 and scorn,  
 Live the great life which all our great-  
 est fain  
 Would follow, centred in eternal calm.

'Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like  
 ourselves <sup>80</sup>  
 Touch, and be touch'd, then would I  
 cry to thee  
 To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender  
 arms  
 Round him, and keep him from the  
 lust of blood  
 That makes a steaming slaughter-  
 house of Rome.

'Ay, but I meant not thee ; I meant  
 not her  
 Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see  
 Slide from that quiet heaven of hers,  
 and tempt  
 The Trojan, while his neatherds were  
 abroad ;  
 Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter  
 wept  
 Her deity false in human-amorous  
 tears : <sup>90</sup>  
 Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter  
 Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,  
 Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called  
 Calliope to grace his golden verse —  
 Ay, and this Kypris also — did I take  
 That popular name of thine to shadow  
 forth  
 The all-generating powers and genial  
 heat  
 Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the  
 thick blood

Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs  
 are glad  
 Nosing the mother's udder, and the  
 bird <sup>100</sup>  
 Makes his heart voice amid the blaze  
 of flowers ;  
 Which things appear the work of  
 mighty Gods.

'The Gods ! and if I go *my* work is  
 left  
 Unfinish'd — *if* I go. The Gods, whc  
 haunt  
 The lucid interspace of world and  
 world,  
 Where never creeps a cloud, or moves  
 a wind,  
 Nor ever falls the least white star of  
 snow,  
 Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,  
 Nor sound of human sorrow mounts  
 to mar  
 Their sacred everlasting calm ! and  
 such, <sup>110</sup>  
 Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,  
 Not such, nor all unlike it, man may  
 gain  
 Letting his own life go. The Gods,  
 the Gods !  
 If all be atoms, how then should the  
 Gods  
 Being atomic not be dissoluble,  
 Not follow the great law ? My master  
 held  
 That Gods there are, for all men so  
 believe.  
 I prest my footsteps into his, and meant  
 Surely to lead my Memmius in a  
 train  
 Of flowery clauses onward to the proof  
 That Gods there are, and deathless.  
 Meant ? I meant ? <sup>121</sup>  
 I have forgotten what I meant ; my  
 mind  
 Stumbles, and all my faculties are  
 lamed.

'Look where another of our Gods,  
 the Sun,  
 Apollo, Delius, or of older use  
 All-seeing Hyperion — what you  
 will —  
 Has mounted yonder ; since he never  
 sware,  
 Except his wrath were wreak'd on  
 wretched man.



That he would only shine among the  
 dead  
 Hereafter—tales! for never yet on  
 earth<sup>130</sup>  
 Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roast-  
 ing ox  
 Moan round the spit—nor knows he  
 what he sees;  
 King of the East altho' he seem, and  
 girt  
 With song and flame and fragrance,  
 slowly lifts  
 His golden feet on those empurpled  
 stairs  
 That climb into the windy halls of  
 heaven.  
 And here he glances on an eye new-  
 born,  
 And gets for greeting but a wail of  
 pain;  
 And here he stays upon a freezing  
 orb  
 That fain would gaze upon him to the  
 last;<sup>140</sup>  
 And here upon a yellow eyelid fallen  
 And closed by those who mourn a  
 friend in vain,  
 Not thankful that his troubles are no  
 more.  
 And me, altho' his fire is on my face  
 Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell  
 Whether I mean this day to end my-  
 self,  
 Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,  
 That men like soldiers may not quit  
 the post  
 Allotted by the Gods. But he that  
 holds  
 The Gods are careless, wherefore need  
 he care<sup>150</sup>  
 Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at  
 once,  
 Being troubled, wholly out of sight,  
 and sink  
 Past earthquake—ay, and gout and  
 stone, that break  
 Body toward death, and palsy, death-  
 in-life,  
 And wretched age—and worst dis-  
 ease of all,  
 These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,  
 And twisted shapes of lust, unspeak-  
 able,  
 Abominable, strangers at my hearth  
 Not welcome, harpies miring every  
 dish,

The phantom husks of something  
 foully done,<sup>160</sup>  
 And fleeting thro' the boundless uni-  
 verse,  
 And blasting the long quiet of my  
 breast  
 With animal heat and dire insanity?

'How should the mind, except it  
 loved them, clasp  
 These idols to herself? or do they fly  
 Now thinner, and now thicker, like  
 the flakes  
 In a fall of snow, and so press in, per-  
 force  
 Of multitude, as crowds that in an  
 hour  
 Of civic tumult jam the doors, and  
 bear  
 The keepers down, and throng, their  
 rags and they<sup>170</sup>  
 The basest, far into that council-hall  
 Where sit the best and stateliest of  
 the land?

'Can I not fling this horror off me  
 again,  
 Seeing with how great ease Nature  
 can smile,  
 Balmier and nobler from her bath of  
 storm,  
 At random ravage? and how easily  
 The mountain there has cast his cloudy  
 slough,  
 Now towering o'er him in serenest air,  
 A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay,  
 and within  
 All hollow as the hopes and fears of  
 men?<sup>180</sup>

'But who was he that in the garden  
 snared  
 Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale  
 To laugh at—more to laugh at in  
 myself—  
 For look! what is it? there? yon ar-  
 butus  
 Totters; a noiseless riot underneath  
 Strikes through the wood, sets all the  
 tops quivering—  
 The mountain quickens into Nymph  
 and Faun;  
 And here an Orcad—how the sun de-  
 lights  
 To glance and shift about her slippery  
 sides,

And rosy knees and supple rounded-  
 ness, <sup>190</sup>  
 And budded bosom-peaks—who this  
 way runs  
 Before the rest!—A satyr, a satyr, see,  
 Follows; but him I proved impossible;  
 Twy-natured is no nature. Yet he  
 draws  
 Nearer and nearer, and I scan him  
 now  
 Beastlier than any phantom of his kind  
 That ever butted his rough brother-  
 brute  
 For lust or lusty blood or provender.  
 I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him;  
 and she  
 Loathes him as well; such a precipi-  
 tate heel, <sup>200</sup>  
 Fledged as it were with Mercury's  
 ankle-wing,  
 Whirls her to me—but will she fling  
 herself  
 Shameless upon me? Catch her, goat-  
 foot! nay,  
 Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wil-  
 derness,  
 And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide!  
 do I wish—  
 What?—that the bush were leafless?  
 or to whelm  
 All of them in one massacre? O ye  
 Gods,  
 I know you careless, yet, behold, to  
 you  
 From childly wont and ancient use I  
 call—  
 I thought I lived securely as your-  
 selves— <sup>210</sup>  
 No lewdness, narrowing envy, mon-  
 key-spite,  
 No madness of ambition, avarice, none;  
 No larger feast than under plane or  
 pine  
 With neighbors laid along the grass,  
 to take  
 Only such cups as left us friendly-  
 warm,  
 Affirming each his own philosophy—  
 Nothing to mar the sober majesties  
 Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.  
 But now it seems some unseen mon-  
 ster lays  
 His vast and filthy hands upon my  
 will, <sup>220</sup>  
 Wrenching it backward into his, and  
 spoils

My bliss in being; and it was not  
 great,  
 For save when shutting reasons up in  
 rhythm,  
 Or Heliconian honey in living words,  
 To make a truth less harsh, I often  
 grew  
 Tired of so much within our little life,  
 Or of so little in our little life—  
 Poor little life that toddles half an  
 hour  
 Crown'd with a flower or two, and  
 there an end—  
 And since the nobler pleasure seems  
 to fade, <sup>230</sup>  
 Why should I, beastlike as I find my-  
 self,  
 Not manlike end myself?—our privi-  
 lege—  
 What beast has heart to do it? And  
 what man,  
 What Roman would be dragg'd in  
 triumph thus?  
 Not I; not he, who bears one name  
 with her  
 Whose death-blow struck the dateless  
 doom of kings,  
 When, brooking not the Tarquin in  
 her veins,  
 She made her blood in sight of Collatine  
 And all his peers, flushing the guilt-  
 less air,  
 Spout from the maiden fountain in  
 her heart. <sup>240</sup>  
 And from it sprang the Common-  
 wealth, which breaks  
 As I am breaking now!  
  
 'And therefore now  
 Let her, that is the womb and tomb  
 of all,  
 Great Nature, take, and forcing far  
 apart  
 Those blind beginnings that have  
 made me man,  
 Dash them anew together at her will  
 Thro' all her cycles—into man once  
 more,  
 Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent  
 flower.  
 But till this cosmic order everywhere  
 Shatter'd into one earthquake in one  
 day <sup>250</sup>  
 Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour  
 perhaps  
 Is not so far when momentary man

Shall seem no more a something to  
 himself,  
 But he, his hopes and hates, his homes  
 and fanes,  
 And even his bones long laid within  
 the grave,  
 The very sides of the grave itself shall  
 pass,  
 Vanishing, atom and void, atom and  
 void,  
 Into the unseen for ever, — till that  
 hour,  
 My golden work in which I told a  
 truth  
 That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,  
 And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake,  
 and plucks <sup>261</sup>  
 The mortal soul from out immortal  
 hell,  
 Shall stand. Ay, surely; then it fails  
 at last  
 And perishes as I must; for O Thou,  
 Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,  
 Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,  
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou art

Without one pleasure and without one  
 pain,  
 Howbeit I know thou surely must be  
 mine <sup>269</sup>  
 Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus  
 I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not  
 How roughly men may woo thee so  
 they win —  
 Thus — thus — the soul flies out and  
 dies in the air.'

With that he drove the knife into  
 his side.  
 She heard him raging, heard him fall,  
 ran in,  
 Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon  
 herself  
 As having fail'd in duty to him,  
 shriek'd  
 That she but meant to win him back,  
 fell on him,  
 Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd. He an-  
 swer'd, 'Care not thou!  
 Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee  
 well!' <sup>280</sup>



‘ The home of my love ’

## THE WINDOW; OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS

WORDS WRITTEN FOR MUSIC

THE MUSIC BY ARTHUR SULLIVAN

Four years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as ‘Orpheus with his lute,’ and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan’s instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

A. TENNYSON.

*December, 1870.*

### ON THE HILL

THE lights and shadows fly!  
Yonder it brightens and darkens down  
on the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover’s eye!  
O, is it the brook, or a pool, or her  
window-pane,  
When the winds are up in the  
morning ?

Clouds that are racing above,  
 And winds and lights and shadows  
 that cannot be still,  
 All running on one way to the home  
 of my love,  
 You are all running on, and I stand  
 on the slope of the hill,  
 And the winds are up in the  
 morning! 10

Follow, follow the chase!  
 And my thoughts are as quick and as  
 quick, ever on, on, on.  
 O lights, are you flying over her  
 sweet little face?  
 And my heart is there before you are  
 come, and gone,  
 When the winds are up in the  
 morning!

Follow them down the slope!  
 And I follow them down to the win-  
 dow-pane of my dear,  
 And it brightens and darkens and  
 brightens like my hope,  
 And it darkens and brightens and  
 darkens like my fear,  
 And the winds are up in the  
 morning! 20

#### AT THE WINDOW

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
 Clasp her window, trail and twine!  
 Rose, rose and clematis,  
 Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,  
 Kiss, kiss; and make her a bower  
 All of flowers, and drop me a  
 flower,  
 Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
 Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine? 30  
 Rose, rose and clematis,  
 Drop me a flower, a flower to kiss,  
 Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower  
 All of flowers, a flower, a flower,  
 Dropt, a flower.

#### GONE

Gone!  
 Gone, till the end of the year,  
 Gone, and the light gone with her,  
 and left me in shadow here!  
 Gone—flitted away,

Taken the stars from the night and  
 the sun from the day!  
 Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a  
 storm in the air! 40  
 Flown to the east or the west, flitted  
 I know not where!  
 Down in the south is a flash and a  
 groan: she is there! she is  
 there!

#### WINTER

The frost is here,  
 And fuel is dear,  
 And woods are sear,  
 And fires burn clear,  
 And frost is here  
 And has bitten the heel of the going  
 year.

Bite, frost, bite!  
 You roll up away from the light 50  
 The blue wood-louse and the plump  
 dormouse,  
 And the bees are still'd, and the flies  
 are kill'd,  
 And you bite far into the heart of the  
 house,  
 But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite!  
 The woods are all the searer,  
 The fuel is all the dearer,  
 The fires are all the clearer,  
 My spring is all the nearer,  
 You have bitten into the heart of the  
 earth, 60  
 But not into mine.

#### SPRING

Birds' love and birds' song  
 Flying here and there,  
 Birds' song and birds' love,  
 And you with gold for hair!  
 Birds' song and birds' love,  
 Passing with the weather,  
 Men's song and men's love,  
 To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love, 70  
 And women's love and men's!  
 And you my wren with a crown of  
 gold,  
 You my queen of the wrens!

You the queen of the wrens —  
 We'll be birds of a feather,  
 I'll be King of the Queen of the  
     wrens,  
 And all in a nest together.

## THE LETTER

Where is another sweet as my sweet,  
 Fine of the fine, and shy of the  
     shy ?  
 Fine little hands, fine little feet — 80  
     Dewy blue eye.  
 Shall I write to her ? shall I go ?  
 Ask her to marry me by and by ?  
 Somebody said that she'd say no ;  
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay !

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face ?  
 Ay or no, from shy of the shy ?  
 Go, little letter, apace, apace,  
     Fly ; 89  
 Fly to the light in the valley below —  
 Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye.  
 Somebody said that she'd say no ;  
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay !

## NO ANSWER

The mist and the rain, the mist and  
     the rain !  
 Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?  
 And never a glimpse of her window-  
     pane !  
 And I may die but the grass will  
     grow,  
 And the grass will grow when I am  
     gone,  
 And the wet west wind and the  
     world will go on. 99

Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,  
 No is trouble and cloud and storm,  
 Ay is life for a hundred years,  
 No will push me down to the  
     worm,  
 And when I am there and dead and  
     gone,  
 The wet west wind and the world  
     will go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and  
     the wet !  
 Wet west wind, how you blow, you  
     blow !

And never a line from my lady yet !  
 Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?  
 Blow then, blow, and when I am  
     gone, 110  
 The wet west wind and the world  
     may go on.

## NO ANSWER

Winds are loud and you are dumb,  
 Take my love, for love will come,  
     Love will come but once a life.  
 Winds are loud and winds will pass !  
 Spring is here with leaf and grass ;  
     Take my love and be my wife.  
 After-loves of maids and men  
 Are but dainties drest again.  
 Love me now, you'll love me then ; 120  
     Love can love but once a life.

## THE ANSWER

Two little hands that meet,  
 Claspt on her seal, my sweet !  
 Must I take you and break you,  
 Two little hands that meet ?  
 I must take you, and break you,  
 And loving hands must part —  
 Take, take — break, break —  
 Break — you may break my heart.  
 Faint heart never won — 130  
 Break, break, and all's done.

## AY

Be merry, all birds, to-day,  
 Be merry on earth as you never  
     were merry before,  
 Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far  
     away,  
 And merry for ever and ever, and  
     one day more.

## Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.  
 Look, look, how he flits,  
 The fire-crown'd king of the wrens  
     from out of the pine !  
 Look how they tumble the blossom,  
 the mad little tits ! 140  
 'Cuck-oo ! Cuck-oo !' was ever a  
     May so fine ?

## Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.  
 O merry the linnet and dove,

And swallow and sparrow and  
 thristle, and have your desire !  
 O merry my heart, you have gotten  
 the wings of love,  
 And flit like the king of the wrens  
 with a crown of fire.  
                                     Why ?  
 For it's ay ay, ay ay.

•                   WHEN

Sun comes, moon comes,                   150  
 Time slips away.  
 Sun sets, moon sets,  
 Love, fix a day.  
 'A year hence, a year hence.'  
 'We shall both be gray.'  
 'A month hence, a month hence.'  
 'Far, far away.'  
 'A week hence, a week hence.'  
 'Ah, the long delay !'  
 'Wait a little, wait a little,                   160  
 You shall fix a day.'  
 'To-morrow, love, to-morrow,  
 And that's an age away.'  
 Blaze upon her window, sun,  
 And honor all the day.

MARRIAGE MORNING

Light, so low upon earth,  
 You send a flash to the sun.  
 Here is the golden close of love,  
 All my wooing is done.  
 O, the woods and the meadows,                   170  
 Woods where we hid from the wet,  
 Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,  
 Meadows in which we met !

Light, so low in the vale  
 You flash and lighten afar,  
 For this is the golden morning of  
 love,  
 And you are his morning star.  
 Flash, I am coming, I come,  
 By meadow and stile and wood,  
 O, lighten into my eyes and my  
 heart,                   180  
 Into my heart and my blood !

Heart, are you great enough  
 For a love that never tires ?  
 O heart, are you great enough for  
 love ?  
 I have heard of thorns and briers.  
 Over the thorns and briers,  
 Over the meadows and stiles,  
 Over the world to the end of it  
 Flash for a million miles.



‘She was dark-hair’d, dark-eyed’

## THE LOVER’S TALE

The original Preface to ‘The Lover’s Tale’ states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends, however, who, boylike, admired the boy’s work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light — accompanied with a reprint of the sequel — a work of my mature life — ‘The Golden Supper’?

*May, 1879.*

### ARGUMENT

Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

<p>I</p> <p>HERE far away, seen from the top- most cliff, Filling with purple gloom the vacan- cies</p>	<p>Between the tufted hills, the sloping seas Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way down rare sails, White as white clouds, floated from sky to sky.</p>
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O pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,  
 Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,  
 Where the chafed breakers of the outer sea  
 Sank powerless, as anger falls aside  
 And withers on the breast of peaceful love!  
 Thou didst receive the growth of pines  
 that fledged  
 The hills that watch'd thee, as Love watcheth Love,  
 In thine own essence, and delight thyself  
 To make it wholly thine on sunny days.  
 Keep thou thy name of 'Lover's Bay.'  
 See, sirs,  
 Even now the Goddess of the Past,  
 that takes  
 The heart, and sometimes touches but one string  
 That quivers and is silent, and sometimes  
 Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd chords  
 To some old melody, begins to play  
 That air which pleased her first. I feel thy breath;  
 I come, great Mistress of the ear and eye;  
 Thy breath is of the pine-wood, and tho' years  
 Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy strait  
 Betwixt the native land of Love and me,  
 Breathe but a little on me, and the sail  
 Will draw me to the rising of the sun,  
 The lucid chambers of the morning star,  
 And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,  
 To pass my hand across my brows, and muse  
 On those dear hills, that nevermore will meet  
 The sight that throbs and aches beneath my touch,  
 As tho' there beat a heart in either eye;  
 For when the outer lights are darken'd thus,  
 The memory's vision hath a keener edge.

It grows upon me now — the semi-circle  
 Of dark-blue waters and the narrow fringe  
 Of curving beach — its wreaths of dripping green —  
 Its pale pink shells — the summer-house aloft  
 That open'd on the pines with doors of glass,  
 A mountain nest — the pleasure-boat that rock'd,  
 Light-green with its own shadow, keel to keel,  
 Upon the dappled dimplings of the wave  
 That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope!  
 They come, they crowd upon me all at once —  
 Moved from the cloud of unforgotten things,  
 That sometimes on the horizon of the mind  
 Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in storm —  
 Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me — days  
 Of dewy dawning and the amber eves  
 When thou and I, Camilla, thou and I  
 Were borne about the bay or safely moor'd  
 Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where the tide  
 Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all without  
 The slowly-ridging rollers on the cliffs  
 Clash'd, calling to each other, and thro' the arch  
 Down those loud waters, like a setting star,  
 Mixt with the gorgeous west the light-house shone,  
 And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell  
 Would often loiter in her balmy blue,  
 To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love  
 Waver'd at anchor with me, when day hung  
 From his mid-dome in heaven's airy halls;

Gleams of the water-circles as they  
broke  
Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about  
her lips,  
Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,  
Leapt like a passing thought across  
her eyes;  
And mine with one that will not pass,  
till earth  
And heaven pass too, dwelt on my  
heaven, a face  
Most starry-fair, but kindled from  
within<sup>70</sup>  
As 't were with dawn. She was dark-  
hair'd, dark-eyed —  
O, such dark eyes! a single glance of  
them  
Will govern a whole life from birth to  
death,  
Careless of all things else, led on with  
light  
In trances and in visions. Look at  
them,  
You lose yourself in utter ignorance;  
You cannot find their depth; for they  
go back,  
And farther back, and still withdraw  
themselves  
Quite into the deep soul, that evermore  
Fresh springing from her fountains in  
the brain,<sup>80</sup>  
Still pouring thro', floods with redun-  
dant life  
Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago  
I should have died, if it were possible  
To die in gazing on that perfectness  
Which I do bear within me. I had  
died,  
But from my farthest lapse, my latest  
ebb,  
Thine image, like a charm of light and  
strength  
Upon the waters, push'd me back again  
On these deserted sands of barren life.  
Tho' from the deep vault where the  
heart of Hope<sup>90</sup>  
Fell into dust, and crumbled in the  
dark —  
Forgetting how to render beautiful  
Her countenance with quick and  
healthful blood —  
Thou didst not sway me upward;  
could I perish  
While thou, a meteor of the sepulchre,

Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's  
quiet urn  
For ever? He that saith it hath o'er-  
stept  
The slippery footing of his narrow wit,  
And fallen away from judgment.  
Thou art light,  
To which my spirit leaneth all her  
flowers,<sup>100</sup>  
And length of days, and immortality  
Of thought, and freshness ever self  
renew'd.  
For Time and Grief abode too long  
with Life,  
And, like all other friends i' the world,  
at last  
They grew weary of her fellowship.  
So Time and Grief did beckon unto  
Death,  
And Death drew nigh and beat the  
doors of Life;  
But thou didst sit alone in the inner  
house,  
A wakeful portress, and didst parle  
with Death, —  
'This is a charmed dwelling which I  
hold;'<sup>110</sup>  
So Death gave back, and would no  
further come.  
Yet is my life nor in the present time,  
Nor in the present place. To me alone,  
Push'd from his chair of regal heritage,  
The Present is the vassal of the Past:  
So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,  
And cannot die, and am, in having  
been —  
A portion of the pleasant yesterday,  
Thrust forward on to-day and out of  
place;  
A body journeying onward, sick with  
toil,<sup>120</sup>  
The weight as if of age upon my limbs,  
The grasp of hopeless grief about my  
heart,  
And all the senses weaken'd, save in  
that,  
Which long ago they had glean'd and  
garner'd up  
Into the granaries of memory —  
The clear brow, bulwark of the pre-  
cious brain,  
Chink'd as you see, and seam'd — and  
all the while  
The light soul twines and mingles with  
the growths  
Of vigorous early days, attracted, won,

Married, made one with, molten into  
 all <sup>130</sup>  
 The beautiful in Past of act or place,  
 And like the all-enduring camel, driven  
 Far from the diamond fountain by the  
 palms,  
 Who toils across the middle moonlit  
 nights,  
 Or when the white heats of the blind-  
 ing noons  
 Beat from the concave sand; yet in  
 him keeps  
 A draught of that sweet fountain that  
 he loves,  
 To stay his feet from falling and his  
 spirit  
 From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,  
 When I began to love. How should I  
 tell you? <sup>140</sup>  
 Or from the after-fulness of my heart,  
 Flow back again unto my slender  
 spring  
 And first of love, tho' every turn and  
 depth  
 Between is clearer in my life than all  
 Its present flow. Ye know not what  
 ye ask.  
 How should the broad and open flower  
 tell  
 What sort of bud it was, when, prest  
 together  
 In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken  
 folds,  
 It seem'd to keep its sweetness to itself,  
 Yet was not the less sweet for that it  
 seem'd? <sup>150</sup>  
 For young Life knows not when young  
 Life was born,  
 But takes it all for granted: neither  
 Love,  
 Warm in the heart, his cradle, can re-  
 member  
 Love in the womb, but resteth satis-  
 fied,  
 Looking on her that brought him to  
 the light;  
 Or as men know not when they fall  
 asleep  
 Into delicious dreams, our other life,  
 So know I not when I began to love.  
 This is my sum of knowledge—that  
 my love  
 Grew with myself—say rather, was  
 my growth, <sup>160</sup>

My inward sap, the hold I have on  
 earth,  
 My outward circling air wherewith I  
 breathe,  
 Which yet upholds my life, and ever-  
 more  
 Is to me daily life and daily death.  
 For how should I have lived and not  
 have loved?  
 Can ye take off the sweetness from the  
 flower,  
 The color and the sweetness from the  
 rose,  
 And place them by themselves; or set  
 apart  
 Their motions and their brightness  
 from the stars,  
 And then point out the flower or the  
 star? <sup>170</sup>  
 Or build a wall betwixt my life and  
 love,  
 And tell me where I am? 'Tis even  
 thus:  
 In that I live I love; because I love  
 I live. What'er is fountain to the  
 one  
 Is fountain to the other; and when'er  
 Our God unknits the riddle of the one,  
 There is no shade or fold of mystery  
 Swathing the other.

Many, many years—  
 For they seem many and my most of  
 life,  
 And well I could have linger'd in that  
 porch, <sup>180</sup>  
 So unproportion'd to the dwelling-  
 place,—  
 In the May-dews of childhood, oppo-  
 site  
 The flush and dawn of youth, we lived  
 together,  
 Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father  
 died,  
 And he was happy that he saw it not;  
 But I and the first daisy on his grave  
 From the same clay came into light at  
 once.  
 As Love and I do number equal years,  
 So she, my love, is of an age with me.  
 How like each other was the birth of  
 each! <sup>191</sup>  
 On the same morning, almost the same  
 hour,

Under the selfsame aspect of the stars—

O, falsehood of all star-craft!—we were born.

How like each other was the birth of each!

The sister of my mother—she that bore Camilla close beneath her beating heart,

Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,

With its true-touched pulses in the flow And hourly visitation of the blood, <sup>200</sup>

Sent notes of preparation manifold, And mellow'd echoes of the outer world—

My mother's sister, mother of my love, Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,

One twofold mightier than the other was,

In giving so much beauty to the world, And so much wealth as God had charged her with—

Loathing to put it from herself for ever,

Left her own life with it; and dying thus,

Crown'd with her highest act the placid face <sup>210</sup>

And breathless body of her good deeds past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She was motherless,

And I without a father. So from each Of those two pillars which from earth uphold

Our childhood, one had fallen away, and all

The careful burthen of our tender years Trembled upon the other. Ife that gave

Her life, to me delightedly fulfill'd All loving kindnesses, all offices

Of watchful care and trembling tenderness. <sup>220</sup>

He waked for both, he pray'd for both, he slept

Dreaming of both; nor was his love the less

Because it was divided, and shot forth Boughs on each side, laden with whole-

some shade, Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,

And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister. On one arm

The flaxen ringlets of our infancies Wander'd, the while we rested; one

soft lap Pillow'd us both; a common light of

eyes <sup>230</sup> Was on us as we lay; our baby lips,

Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence

The stream of life, one stream, one life, one blood,

One sustenance, which, still as thought grew large,

Still larger moulding all the house of thought,

Made all our tastes and fancies like, perhaps—

All—all but one; and strange to me, and sweet,

Sweet thro' strange years to know that whatsoe'er

Our general mother meant for me alone,

Our mutual mother dealt to both of us. <sup>240</sup>

So what was earliest mine in earliest life,

I shar'd with her in whom myself remains.

As was our childhood, so our infancy,

They tell me, was a very miracle Of fellow-feeling and communion.

They tell me that we would not be alone,—

We cried when we were parted; when I wept,

Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,

Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that we loved

The sound of one another's voices more Than the gray cuckoo loves his name,

and learn'd <sup>250</sup> To lip in tune together; that we slept

In the same cradle always, face to face, Heart beating time to heart, lip press-

ing lip, Folding each other, breathing on each other,

Dreaming together—dreaming of each other,

They should have added,—till the morning light

Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy  
pane  
Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we  
woke  
To gaze upon each other. If this be  
true, <sup>260</sup>  
At thought of which my whole soul  
languishes  
And faints, and hath no pulse, no  
breath—as tho'  
A man in some still garden should in-  
fuse  
Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,  
Till, drunk with its own wine, and  
overfull  
Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,  
It fall on its own thorns—if this be  
true—  
And that way my wish leads me ever-  
more  
Still to believe it, 'tis so sweet a  
thought—  
Why in the utter stillness of the  
soul <sup>270</sup>  
Doth question'd memory answer not,  
nor tell  
Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,  
Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest har-  
mony?

O blossom'd portal of the lonely  
house,  
Green prelude, April promise, glad  
new-year  
Of being, which with earliest violets  
And lavish carol of clear-throated larks  
Fill'd all the March of life!—I will  
not speak of thee,  
These have not seen thee, these can  
never know thee,  
They cannot understand me. Pass  
we then <sup>280</sup>  
A term of eighteen years. Ye would  
but laugh  
If I should tell you how I hoard in  
thought  
The faded rhymes and scraps of an  
cient crones,  
Gray relics of the nurseries of the  
world,  
Which are as gems set in my memory,  
Because she learnt them with me; or  
what use  
To know her father left us just before  
The daffodil was blown? or how we  
found

The dead man cast upon the shore?  
All this  
Seems to the quiet daylight of your  
minds  
But cloud and smoke, and in the dark <sup>290</sup>  
of mine  
Is traced with flame. Move with me  
to the event.

There came a glorious morning,  
such a one  
As dawns but once a season. Mercury  
On such a morning would have flung  
himself  
From cloud to cloud, and swum with  
balanced wings  
To some tall mountain. When I said  
to her,  
'A day for gods to stoop,' she an-  
swered, 'Ay,  
And men to soar;' for as that other  
gazed,  
Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,  
The prophet and the chariot and the  
steeds, <sup>301</sup>  
Suck'd into oneness like a little star  
Were drunk into the inmost blue, we  
stood,  
When first we came from out the  
pines at noon,  
With hands for caves, uplooking and  
almost  
Waiting to see some blessed shape in  
heaven,  
So bathed we were in brilliance.  
Never yet  
Before or after have I known the spring  
Pour with such sudden deluges of light  
Into the middle summer; for that day  
Love, rising, shook his wings, and  
charged the winds <sup>311</sup>  
With spiced May-sweets from bound  
to bound, and blew  
Fresh fire into the sun, and from  
within  
Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent  
his soul  
Into the songs of birds, and touch'd  
far-off  
His mountain-altars, his high hills,  
with flame  
Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound:  
The great pine shook with lonely  
sounds of joy

That came on the sea-wind. As mountain streams  
 Our bloods ran free; the sunshine seem'd to brood<sup>320</sup>  
 More warmly on the heart than on the brow.  
 We often paused, and, looking back, we saw  
 The clefts and openings in the mountains fill'd  
 With the blue valley and the glistening brooks,  
 And all the low dark groves, a land of love!  
 A land of promise, a land of memory,  
 A land of promise flowing with the milk  
 And honey of delicious memories!  
 And down to sea, and far as eye could ken,  
 Each way from verge to verge a Holy Land,<sup>330</sup>  
 Still growing holier as you near'd the bay,  
 For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd  
 The grassy platform on some hill, I stoop'd,  
 I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her brows  
 And mine made garlands of the self-same flower,  
 Which she took smiling, and with my work thus  
 Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or twice she told me —  
 For I remember all things — to let grow  
 The flowers that run poison in their veins.  
 She said, 'The evil flourish in the world'<sup>340</sup>  
 Then playfully she gave herself the lie —  
 'Nothing in nature is unbeautiful;  
 So, brother, pluck and spare not.' So  
 I wove  
 Even the dull-blooded poppy-stem,  
 'whose flower,  
 Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sunrise,  
 Like to the wild youth of an evil prince,  
 Is without sweetness, but who crowns himself  
 Above the naked poisons of his heart

In his old age.' A graceful thought of hers  
 Graven on my fancy! And O, how like a nymph,<sup>350</sup>  
 A stately mountain nymph she look'd!  
 how naive  
 Unto the hills she trod on! While I gazed  
 My coronal slowly disintwined itself  
 And fell between us both; tho' while I gazed  
 My spirit leap'd as with those thrills of bliss  
 That strike across the soul in prayer, and show us  
 That we are surely heard. Methought a light  
 Burst from the garland I had woven, and stood  
 A solid glory on her bright black hair;  
 A light methought broke from her dark, dark eyes,<sup>360</sup>  
 And shot itself into the singing winds;  
 A mystic light flash'd even from her white robe  
 As from a glass in the sun, and fell about  
 My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came  
 To what our people call 'The Hill of Woe.'  
 A bridge is there, that, look'd at from beneath,  
 Seems but a cobweb filament to link  
 The yawning of an earthquake-cloven chasm.  
 And thence one night, when all the winds were loud,  
 A woful man — for so the story went —  
 Had thrust his wife and child and dash'd himself<sup>37</sup>  
 Into the dizzy depth below. Below,  
 Fierce in the strength of far descent, a stream  
 Flies with a shatter'd foam along the chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely strown with crags.  
 We mounted slowly; yet to both there came  
 The joy of life in steepness overcome,  
 And victories of ascent, and looking down

On all that had look'd down on us ; and  
 joy  
 In breathing nearer heaven ; and joy  
 to me, <sup>380</sup>  
 High over all the azure-circled earth,  
 To breathe with her as if in heaven  
 itself ;  
 And more than joy that I to her  
 became  
 Her guardian and her angel, raising  
 her  
 Still higher, past all peril, until she  
 saw  
 Beneath her feet the region far away,  
 Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky  
 brows,  
 Arise in open prospect — heath and  
 hill,  
 And hollow lined and wooded to the  
 lips,  
 And steep-down walls of battlemented  
 rock <sup>390</sup>  
 Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into  
 spires,  
 And glory of broad waters interfused,  
 Whence rose as it were breath and  
 steam of gold,  
 And over all the great wood rioting  
 And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at  
 intervals  
 With falling brook or blossom'd bush  
 — and last,  
 Framing the mighty landscape to the  
 west,  
 A purple range of mountain-cones,  
 between  
 Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding  
 bursts  
 The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length

Descending from the point, and stand-  
 ing both <sup>401</sup>  
 There on the tremulous bridge, that  
 from beneath  
 Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in  
 air,  
 We paused amid the splendor. All  
 the west  
 And even unto the middle south was  
 ribb'd  
 And barr'd with bloom on bloom.  
 The sun below,  
 Held for a space 'twixt cloud and  
 wave, shower'd down  
 Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over

That various wilderness a tissue of  
 light  
 Unparallel'd. On the other side, the  
 moon, <sup>410</sup>  
 Half-melted into thin blue air, stood  
 still,  
 And pale and fibrous as a wither'd  
 leaf,  
 Nor yet endured in presence of His  
 eyes  
 To indue his lustre ; most unloverlike,  
 Since in his absence full of light and  
 joy,  
 And giving light to others. But this  
 most,  
 Next to her presence whom I loved so  
 well,  
 Spoke loudly even into my inmost  
 heart  
 As to my outward hearing. The  
 loud stream,  
 Forth issuing from his portals in the  
 crag, — <sup>420</sup>  
 A visible link unto the home of my  
 heart, —  
 Ran amber toward the west, and nigh  
 the sea  
 Parting my own loved mountains  
 was received,  
 Shorn of its strength, into the sympa-  
 thy  
 Of that small bay, which out to open  
 main  
 Glow'd intermingling close beneath  
 the sun.  
 Spirit of Love ! that little hour was  
 bound,  
 Shut in from Time, and dedicate to  
 thee ;  
 Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it,  
 and the earth  
 They fell on became hallow'd ever-  
 more. <sup>430</sup>

We turn'd, our eyes met ; hers were  
 bright, and mine  
 Were dim with floating tears, that  
 shot the sunset  
 In lightnings round me, and my name  
 was borne  
 Upon her breath. Henceforth my  
 name has been  
 A hallow'd memory like the names of  
 old,  
 A centred, glory-circled memory,  
 And a peculiar treasure, brooking not

Exchange or currency; and in that hour  
 A hope flow'd round me, like a golden mist  
 Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs, <sup>440</sup>  
 A moment, ere the onward whirlwind shatter it,  
 Waver'd and floated — which was less than Hope,  
 Because it lack'd the power of perfect Hope;  
 But which was more and higher than all Hope,  
 Because all other Hope had lower aim;  
 Even that this name to which her gracious lips  
 Did lend such gentle utterance, this one name,  
 In some obscure hereafter, might inwreath —  
 How lovelier, nobler then ! — her life, her love,  
 With my life, love, soul, spirit, and heart and strength. <sup>450</sup>  
 'Brother,' she said, 'let this be call'd henceforth  
 The Hill of Hope;' and I replied,  
 'O sister,  
 My will is one with thine; the Hill of Hope.'  
 Nevertheless, we did not change the name.

I did not speak; I could not speak my love.  
 Love lieth deep, Love dwells not in lip-depths.  
 Love wraps his wings on either side the heart,  
 Constraining it with kisses close and warm,  
 Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts  
 So that they pass not to the shrine of sound. <sup>460</sup>  
 Else had the life of that dighted hour  
 Drunk in the largeness of the utterance  
 Of Love; but how should earthly measure mete  
 The heavenly-unmeasured or unlimited Love,  
 Who scarce can tune his high majestic sense

Unto the thunder-song that wheels the spheres,  
 Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,  
 And flowing odor of the spacious air,  
 Scarce housed within the circle of this earth,  
 Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,  
 Which pass with that which breathes them? Sooner earth <sup>471</sup>  
 Might go round heaven, and the strait girth of Time  
 Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,  
 Than language grasp the infinite of Love.

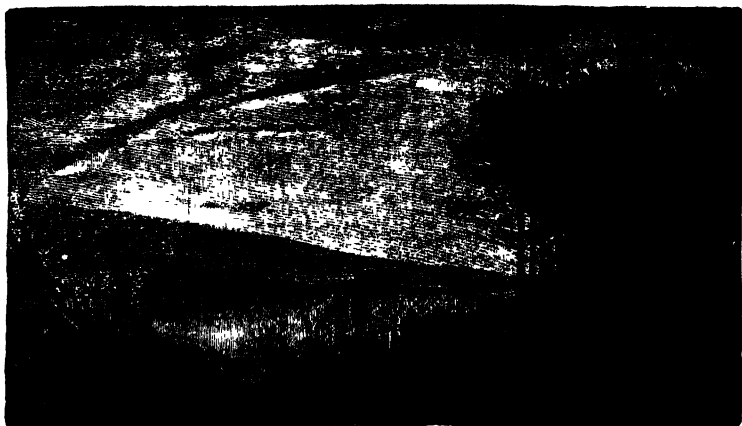
O day which did enwomb that happy hour,  
 Thou art blessed in the years, divinest day!  
 O Genius of that hour which dost uphold  
 Thy coronal of glory like a god,  
 Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,  
 Who walk before thee, ever turning round <sup>480</sup>  
 To gaze upon thee till their eyes are dim  
 With dwelling on the light and depth of thine,  
 Thy name is ever worshipp'd among hours!  
 Had I died then, I had not seem'd to die,  
 For bliss stood round me like the light of heaven, —  
 Had I died then, I had not known the death;  
 Yea, had the Power from whose right hand the light  
 Of Life issueth, and from whose left hand floweth  
 The Shadow of Death, perennial effluences,  
 Whereof to all that draw the wholesome air, <sup>490</sup>  
 Somewhile the one must overflow the other —  
 Then had he stemm'd my day with night, and driven  
 My current to the fountain whence it sprang, —  
 Even his own abiding excellence —  
 On me, methinks, that shock of gloom had fallen  
 Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged  
 The other, like the sun I gazed upon.



Which seeming for the moment due to  
 death,  
 And dipping his head low beneath the  
 verge,  
 Yet bearing round about him his own  
 day, <sup>500</sup>  
 In confidence of unabated strength,  
 Steppeth from heaven to heaven,  
 from light to light,  
 And holdeth his undimmed forehead  
 far  
 Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the down-  
 ward hill ;  
 We past from light to dark. On the  
 other side  
 Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain  
 hall,  
 Which none have fathom'd. If you  
 go far in —  
 The country people rumor — you may  
 hear  
 The moaning of the woman and the  
 child, <sup>510</sup>  
 Shut in the secret chambers of the  
 rock.  
 I too have heard a sound — perchance  
 of streams  
 Running far on within its inmost halls,  
 The home of darkness ; but the cavern-  
 mouth,  
 Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,  
 Gives birth to a brawling brook, that  
 passing lightly  
 Adown a natural stair of tangled  
 roots,  
 Is presently received in a sweet grave  
 Of eglantines, a place of burial  
 Far lovelier than its cradle ; for un-  
 seen <sup>520</sup>  
 But taken with the sweetness of the  
 place,  
 It makes a constant bubbling melody  
 That drowns the nearer echoes.  
 Lower down  
 Spreads out a little lake, that, flood-  
 ing, leaves  
 Low banks of yellow sand ; and from  
 the woods  
 That belt it rise three dark, tall  
 cypresses, —  
 Three cypresses, symbols of mortal  
 woe,  
 That men plant over graves.

**Hither we came,**  
 And sitting down upon the golden  
 moss,  
 Held converse sweet and low — low  
 converse sweet, <sup>530</sup>  
 In which our voices bore least part.  
 The wind  
 Told a love-tale beside us, how he  
 woo'd  
 The waters, and the waters answering  
 lisp'd  
 To kisses of the wind, that, sick with  
 love,  
 Fainted at intervals, and grew again  
 To utterance of passion. Ye cannot  
 shape  
 Fancy so fair as is this memory.  
 Methought all excellence that ever  
 was  
 Had drawn herself from many thou-  
 sand years,  
 And all the separate Edens of this  
 earth, <sup>540</sup>  
 To centre in this place and time. I lis-  
 ten'd,  
 And her words stole with most pre-  
 vailing sweetness  
 Into my heart, as thronging fancies  
 come  
 To boys and girls when summer days  
 are new,  
 And soul and heart and body are all  
 at ease.  
 What marvel my Camilla told me all ?  
 It was so happy an hour, so sweet a  
 place,  
 And I was as the brother of her blood,  
 And by that name I moved upon her  
 breath ;  
 Dear name, which had too much of  
 nearness in it <sup>550</sup>  
 And heralded the distance of this time !  
 At first her voice was very sweet and  
 low,  
 As if she were afraid of utterance ;  
 But in the onward current of her  
 speech, —  
 As echoes of the hollow-banked brooks  
 Are fashion'd by the channel which  
 they keep, —  
 Her words did of their meaning borrow  
 sound,  
 Her cheek did catch the color of her  
 words.  
 I heard and trembled, yet I could but  
 hear :



'Lower down  
Spreads out a little lake'

My heart paused — my raised eyelids  
would not fall, 560

But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.  
I seem'd the only part of Time stood  
still,

And saw the motion of all other things ;  
While her words, syllable by syllable,  
Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear  
Fell, and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not  
to speak ;

But she spake on, for I did name no  
wish.

What marvel my Camilla told me all  
Her maiden dignities of Hope and  
Love —

'Perchance,' she said, 'return'd' ?  
Even then the stars 570

Did tremble in their stations as I gazed ;  
But she spake on, for I did name no  
wish,

No wish — no hope. Hope was not  
wholly dead,

But breathing hard at the approach of  
death, —

Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine  
No longer in the dearest sense of  
mine —

For all the secret of her inmost heart,  
And all the maiden empire of her mind,  
Lay like a map before me, and I saw  
There, where I hoped myself to reign  
as king, 580

There, where that day I crown'd my-  
self as king,

There in my realm and even on my  
throne,

*Another !* Then it seem'd as tho' a link  
Of some tight chain within my inmost  
frame

Was riven in twain ; that life I heeded  
not

Flow'd from me, and the darkness of  
the grave,

The darkness of the grave and utter  
night,

Did swallow up my vision ; at her feet,  
Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,

Smit with exceeding sorrow unto  
death. 590

Then had the earth beneath me  
yawning cloven

With such a sound as when an iceberg  
splits

From cope to base — had Heaven from  
all her doors,

With all her golden thresholds clash-  
ing, roll'd

Her heaviest thunder — I had lain as  
dead,

Mute, blind, and motionless as then I  
lay ;

Dead, for henceforth there was no life  
for me !

Mute, for henceforth what use were  
words to me ?

Blind, for the day was as the night to  
me !

The night to me was kinder than the  
day ; 600

The night in pity took away my day,  
Because my grief as yet was newly  
born

Of eyes too weak to look upon the  
light ;

And thro' the hasty notice of the ear  
Frail Life was startled from the tender  
love

Of him she brooded over. Would I had  
lain

Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound  
Round my worn limbs, and the wild  
brier had driven

Its knotted thorns thro' my unpaining  
brows,

Leaning its roses on my faded eyes.  
The wind had blown above me, and  
the rain 611

Had fallen upon me, and the gilded  
snake

Had nestled in this bosom-throne of  
Love,

But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me.  
All too soon

Life—like a wanton, too-officious  
friend,

Who will not *hear* denial, vain and rude  
With proffer of unwish'd-for services—

Entering all the avenues of sense  
Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,

With hated warmth of apprehensive-  
ness. 621

And first the chillness of the sprinkled  
brook

Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd  
to hear

Its murmur, as the drowning seaman  
hears,

Who with his head below the surface  
dropt

Listens the muffled booming indistinct  
Of the confused floods, and dimly  
knows

His head shall rise no more ; and then  
came in

The white light of the weary moon  
above,

Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.

Was my sight drunk that it did shape  
to me 631

Him who should own that name ?  
Were it not well

If so be that the echo of that name  
Ringing within the fancy had updrawn

A fashion and a phantasm of the form  
It should attach to ? Phantom !—had  
the ghastliest

That ever lusted for a body, sucking  
The foul steam of the grave to thicken  
by it,

There in the shuddering moonlight  
brought its face

And what it has for eyes as close to  
mine 641

As he did—better that than his, thar.  
he

The friend, the neighbor, Lionel, the  
beloved,

The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,  
The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,

All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.  
O, how her choice did leap forth from  
his eyes !

O, how her love did clothe itself in  
smiles

About his lips ! and—not one mo-  
ment's grace—

Then when the effect weigh'd seas  
upon my head

To come my way ! to twit me with  
the cause ! 650

Was not the land as free thro' all  
her ways

To him as me ? Was not his wont to  
walk

Between the going light and growing  
night ?

Had I not learnt my loss before he  
came ?

Could that be more because he came  
my way ?

Why should he not come my way if  
he would ?

And yet to-night, to-night—when all  
my wealth

Flash'd from me in a moment and I  
fell

Beggar'd for ever—why *should* he  
come my way

Robed in those robes of light I must  
not wear, 660

With that great crown of beams about  
his brows—

Come like an angel to a damned soul,  
To tell him of the bliss he had with  
God —

Come like a careless and a greedy heir  
That scarce can wait the reading of  
the will

Before he takes possession ? Was mine  
a mood

To be invaded rudely, and not rather  
A sacred, secret, unapproached woe,  
Unspeakable ? I was shut up with  
Grief ;

She took the body of my past delight,  
Narded and swathed and balm'd it for  
herself, 671

And laid it in a sepulchre of rock  
Never to rise again. I was led mute  
Into her temple like a sacrifice ;  
I was the High Priest in her holiest  
place,  
Not to be loudly broken in upon.

O friend, thoughts deep and heavy  
as these well-nigh  
O'erbore the limits of my brain : but he  
Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm  
upstay'd.

I thought it was an adder's fold, and  
once 680

I strove to disengage myself, but  
fail'd,

Being so feeble. She bent above me,  
too ;

Wan was her cheek, for whatsoe'er of  
blight

Lives in the dewy touch of pity had  
made

The red rose there a pale one — and  
her eyes —

I saw the moonlight glitter on their  
tears —

And some few drops of that distress-  
ful rain

Fell on my face, and her long ringlets  
moved,

Drooping and beaten by the breeze,  
and brush'd

My fallen forehead in their to and fro,  
For in the sudden anguish of her  
heart 691

Loosed from their simple thrall they  
had flow'd abroad,

And floated on and parted round her  
neck,

Mantling her form halfway. She,  
when I woke,

Something she ask'd, I know not what,  
and ask'd,

Unanswer'd, since I spake not ; for the  
sound

Of that dear voice so musically  
low,

And now first heard with any sense of  
pain,

As it had taken life away before,  
Choked all the syllables that strove to  
rise 700

From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,  
From his great hoard of happiness dis-  
till'd

Some drops of solace : like a vain rich  
man,

That, having always prosper'd in the  
world,

Folding his hands, deals comfortable  
words

To hearts wounded for ever ; yet, in  
truth,

Fair speech was his and delicate of  
phrase,

Falling in whispers on the sense, ad-  
dress'd

More to the inward than the outward  
ear,

As rain of the midsummer midnight  
soft, 710

Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and  
the green

Of the dead spring : but mine was  
wholly dead,

No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for  
me.

Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd  
wrong ?

And why was I to darken their pure  
love ?

If, as I found, they two did love each  
other,

Because my own was darken'd ? Why  
was I

To cross between their happy star and  
them ?

To stand a shadow by their shining  
doors,

And vex them with my darkness ? Did  
I love her ? 720

Ye know that I did love her ; to this  
present

My full-orb'd love has waned not. Did  
I love her,

And could I look upon her tearful  
 eyes?  
 What had *she* done to weep? Why  
 should *she* weep?  
 O innocent of spirit — let my heart  
 Break rather — whom the gentlest airs  
 of heaven  
 Should kiss with an unwonted gentle-  
 ness.  
 Her love did murder mine? What  
 then? She deem'd  
 I wore a brother's mind; she call'd me  
 brother.  
 She told me all her love; she shall not  
 weep. 730

The brightness of a burning thought,  
 awhile  
 In battle with the glooms of my dark  
 will,  
 Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up  
 There on the depth of an unfathom'd  
 woe  
 Reflex of action. Starting up at once,  
 As from a dismal dream of my own  
 death,  
 I, for I loved her, lost my love in Love;  
 I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she  
 loved,  
 And laid it in her own, and sent my  
 cry  
 Thro' the blank night to Him who  
 loving made 740  
 The happy and the unhappy love, that  
 He  
 Would hold the hand of blessing over  
 them,  
 Lionel, the happy, and her, and her,  
 his bride!  
 Let them so love that men and boys  
 may say,  
 'Lo! how they love each other!' till  
 their love  
 Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all  
 Known, when their faces are forgot in  
 the land —  
 One golden dream of love, from which  
 may death  
 Awake them with heaven's music in a  
 life  
 More living to some happier happi-  
 ness, 750  
 Swallowing its precedent in victory.  
 And as for me, Camilla, as for me, —  
 The dew of tears is an unwholesome  
 dew,

They will but sicken the sick plant the  
 more.  
 Deem that I love thee but as brothers  
 do,  
 So shalt thou love me still as sisters do;  
 Or if thou dream aught farther, dream  
 but how  
 I could have loved thee, had there  
 been none else  
 To love as lovers, loved again by thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I  
 spake, 760  
 When I beheld her weep so ruefully;  
 For sure my love should ne'er indue  
 the front  
 And mask of Hate, who lives on others'  
 moans.  
 Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter  
 draughts,  
 And batten on her poisons? Love  
 forbid!  
 Love passeth not the threshold of cold  
 Hate,  
 And Hate is strange beneath the roof  
 of Love.  
 O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up  
 these tears  
 Shed for the love of Love; for tho'  
 mine image,  
 The subject of thy power, be cold in  
 her, 770  
 Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the  
 source  
 Of these sad tears, and feeds their  
 downward flow.  
 So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to  
 death,  
 Received unto himself a part of blame,  
 Being guiltless, as an innocent pris-  
 oner,  
 Who, when the woful sentence hath  
 been past,  
 And all the clearness of his fame hath  
 gone  
 Beneath the shadow of the curse of  
 man,  
 First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom  
 awaked,  
 And looking round upon his tearful  
 friends, 780  
 Forthwith and in his agony conceives  
 A shameful sense as of a cleaving  
 crime —  
 For whence without some guilt should  
 such grief be?

So died that hour, and fell into the  
 abyss  
 Of forms outworn, but not to me out-  
 worn,  
 Who never hail'd another — was there  
 one ?  
 There might be one — one other, worth  
 the life  
 That made it sensible. So that hour  
 died  
 Like odor rapt into the winged wind  
 Borne into alien lands and far away.

There be some hearts so airily built,  
 that they, <sup>791</sup>  
 They — when their love is wreck'd —  
 if Love can wreck —  
 On that sharp ridge of utmost doom  
 ride highly  
 Above the perilous seas of Change and  
 Chance,  
 Nay, more, hold out the lights of  
 cheerfulness;  
 As the tall ship, that many a dreary  
 year  
 Knit to some dismal sandbank far at  
 sea,  
 All thro' the livelong hours of utter  
 dark,  
 Showers slanting light upon the dolor-  
 ous wave.

For me — what light, what gleam on  
 those black ways <sup>800</sup>  
 Where Love could walk with banish'd  
 Hope no more ?

It was ill-done to part you, sisters  
 fair;  
 Love's arms were wreath'd about the  
 neck of Hope,  
 And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love drew  
 in her breath  
 In that close kiss, and drank her whis-  
 per'd tales.  
 They said that Love would die when  
 Hope was gone,  
 And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd  
 after Hope;  
 At last she sought out Memory, and  
 they trod  
 The same old paths where Love had  
 walk'd with Hope,  
 And Memory fed the soul of Love with  
 tears. <sup>810</sup>

## II

From that time forth I would not see  
 her more;  
 But many weary moons I lived alone —  
 Alone, and in the heart of the great  
 forest.



• In the heart of the great forest •

Sometimes upon the hills beside the  
 sea  
 All day I watch'd the floating isles of  
 shade,  
 And sometimes on the shore, upon the  
 sands  
 Insensibly I drew her name, until  
 The meaning of the letters shot into  
 My brain; anon the wanton billow  
 wash'd  
 Them over, till they faded like my  
 love.  
 The hollow caverns heard me — the  
 black brooks  
 Of the mid-forest heard me — the soft  
 winds,  
 Laden with thistle-down and seeds of  
 flowers,  
 Paused in their course to hear me, for  
 my voice  
 Was all of thee; the merry linnet  
 knew me,  
 The squirrel knew me, and the dragon-  
 fly  
 Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.  
 The rough brier tore my bleeding  
 palms; the hemlock,  
 Brow-high, did strike my forehead as  
 I past;  
 Yet trod I not the wild-flower in my  
 path,  
 Nor bruised the wild-bird's egg.

Was this the end?  
 Why grew we then together in one  
 plot?  
 Why fed we from one fountain? drew  
 one sun?  
 Why were our mothers branches of  
 one stem?  
 Why were we one in all things, save  
 in that  
 Where to have been one had been the  
 cope and crown  
 Of all I hoped and fear'd? — if that  
 same nearness  
 Were father to this distance, and that  
 one  
 Vauncourier to this double? if Affec-  
 tion  
 Living slew Love, and Sympathy  
 hew'd out  
 The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the  
 hill

Where last we roam'd together, for  
 the sound  
 Of the loud stream was pleasant, and  
 the wind  
 Came wooingly with woodbine smells.  
 Sometimes  
 All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,  
 Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-  
 cones  
 That spired above the wood; and with  
 mad hand  
 Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-  
 screen,  
 I cast them in the noisy brook be-  
 neath,  
 And watch'd them till they vanish'd  
 from my sight  
 Beneath the bower of wreathed eglan-  
 tines.  
 And all the fragments of the living  
 rock, —  
 Huge blocks, which some old trem-  
 bling of the world  
 Had loosen'd from the mountain, till  
 they fell  
 Half-digging their own graves, —  
 these in my agony  
 Did I make bare of all the golden  
 moss,  
 Wherewith the dashing runnel in the  
 spring  
 Had liveried them all over. In my  
 brain  
 The spirit seem'd to fling from thought  
 to thought,  
 As moonlight wandering thro' a mist;  
 my blood  
 Crept like marsh drains thro' all my  
 languid limbs;  
 The motions of my heart seem'd far  
 within me,  
 Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its  
 pulses;  
 And yet it shook me, that my frame  
 would shudder,  
 As if 't were drawn asunder by the  
 rack.  
 But over the deep graves of Hope and  
 Fear,  
 And all the broken palaces of the past,  
 Brooded one master-passion evermore,  
 Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky  
 Above some fair metropolis, earth-  
 shock'd, —  
 Hung round with ragged rims and  
 burning folds, —

Embatling all with wild and woful  
hues,  
Great hills of ruins, and collapsed  
masses  
Of thunder-shaken columns indistinct,\*  
And fused together in the tyrannous  
light—  
Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me!

Sometimes I thought Camilla was no  
more;  
Some one had told me she was dead,  
and ask'd  
If I would see her burial. Then I  
seem'd<sup>70</sup>  
To rise, and through the forest-shadow  
borne  
With more than mortal swiftness, I ran  
down  
The steepy sea-bank, till I came  
upon  
The rear of a procession, curving round  
The silver-sheeted bay, in front of  
which  
Six stately virgins, all in white, upbare  
A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest  
lawn,  
Wreathed round the bier with gar-  
lands. In the distance,  
From out the yellow woods upon the  
hill  
Look'd forth the summit and the pin-  
nacles<sup>80</sup>  
Of a gray steeple — thence at intervals  
A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,  
Save those six virgins which upheld  
the bier,  
Were stoled from head to foot in flow-  
ing black;  
One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd  
his brow,  
And he was loud in weeping and in  
praise  
Of her we follow'd. A strong sym-  
pathy  
Shook all my soul; I flung myself  
upon him  
In tears and cries. I told him all my  
love,  
How I had loved her from the first;  
whereat<sup>90</sup>  
He shrank and howl'd, and from his  
brow drew back  
His hand to push me from him, and  
the face,  
The very face and form of Lionel

Flash'd thro' my eyes into my inner  
most brain,  
And at his feet I seem'd to faint and  
fall,  
To fall and die away. I could not  
rise,  
Albeit I strove to follow. They past  
on,  
The lordly phantasms! in their float-  
ing folds  
They past and were no more; but I  
had fallen  
Prone by the dashing runnel on the  
grass.<sup>100</sup>

Always the inaudible, invisible  
thought,  
Artificer and subject, lord and slave,  
Shaped by the audible and visible,  
Moulded the audible and visible.  
All crisped sounds of wave and leaf  
and wind  
Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brain;  
The cloud-pavilion'd element, the  
wood,  
The mountain, the three cypresses, the  
cave,  
Storm, sunset, glows and glories of the  
moon  
Below black firs, when silent-creeping  
winds<sup>110</sup>  
Laid the long night in silver streaks  
and bars,  
Were wrought into the tissue of my  
dream.  
The moanings in the forest, the loud  
brook,  
Cries of the partridge like a rusty key  
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dor-  
hawk-whirr  
Awoke me not, but were a part of  
sleep,  
And voices in the distance calling to  
me  
And in my vision bidding me dream  
on,  
Like sounds without the twilight  
realm of dreams,  
Which wander round the bases of the  
hills,<sup>120</sup>  
And murmur at the low-dropt caves of  
sleep,  
Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes  
The vision had fair prelude, in the end  
Opening on darkness, stately vesti-  
bules



To caves and shows of death — whether the mind,  
With some revenge — even to itself  
unknown —

Made strange division of its suffering  
With her, whom to have suffering  
view'd had been

Extremest pain; or that the clear-eyed  
Spirit,

Being blunted in the present, grew at  
length <sup>130</sup>

Prophetical and prescient of what'er  
The future had in store; or that which  
most

Enchains belief, the sorrow of my  
spirit

Was of so wide a compass it took in  
All I had loved, and my dull agony,  
Ideally to her transferr'd, became  
Anguish intolerable.

The day waned;  
Alone I sat with her. About my brow  
Her warm breath floated in the utter-  
ance

Of silver-chorded tones; her lips were  
sunder'd <sup>140</sup>

With smiles of tranquil bliss, which  
broke in light

Like morning from her eyes — her  
eloquent eyes —

As I have seen them many a hundred  
times —

Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro'  
mine down rain'd

Their spirit-searching splendors. As  
a vision

Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd  
In damp and dismal dungeons under-  
ground,

Confined on points of faith, when  
strength is shock'd

With torment, and expectancy of  
worse

Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged  
walls, <sup>150</sup>

All unawares before his half-shut  
eyes,

Comes in upon him in the dead of  
night,

And with the excess of sweetness and  
of awe,

Makes the heart tremble, and the sight  
run over

Upon his steely gyves; so those fair  
eyes

Shone on my darkness, forms which  
ever stood

Within the magic circle of memory,  
Invisible but deathless, waiting still

The edict of the will to reassume  
The semblance of those rare realities  
Of which they were the mirrors. Now  
the light <sup>161</sup>

Which was their life burst through  
the cloud of thought

Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room  
Within the summer-house of which I  
spake,

Hung round with paintings of the  
sea, and one

A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved  
prow

Clambering, the mast bent and the  
ravin wind

In her sail roaring. From the outer  
day,

Betwixt the close-set ivies came a  
broad

And solid beam of isolated light, <sup>170</sup>  
Crowded with driving atomies, and

fell  
Slanting upon that picture, from  
prime youth

Well-known, well-loved. She drew  
it long ago

Forthgazing on the waste and open  
sea,

One morning when the upblown bil-  
low ran

Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I  
had pour'd

Into the shadowing pencil's naked  
forms

Color and life. It was a bond and  
seal

Of friendship, spoken of with tearful  
smiles;

A monument of childhood and of  
love; <sup>180</sup>

The poesy of childhood, my lost love  
Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it

together

In mute and glad remembrance, and  
each heart

Grew closer to the other, and the eye  
Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing

like

The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low  
couch'd —

A beauty which is death ; when all at  
 once  
 That painted vessel, as with inner life,  
 Began to heave upon that painted  
 sea.  
 An earthquake, my loud heart-beats,  
 made the ground <sup>190</sup>  
 Reel under us, and all at once, soul,  
 life  
 And breath and motion, past and  
 flow'd away  
 To those unreal billows. Round and  
 round  
 A whirlwind caught and bore us ;  
 mighty gyres  
 Rapid and vast, of hissingspray wind-  
 driven  
 Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she  
 shriek'd ;  
 My heart was cloven with pain ; I  
 wound my arms  
 About her ; we whirl'd giddily ; the  
 wind  
 Sung, but I clasp'd her without fear.  
 Her weight  
 Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim  
 eyes, <sup>200</sup>  
 And parted lips which drank her  
 breath, down-hung  
 The jaws of Death. I, groaning,  
 from me flung  
 Her empty phantom ; all the sway  
 and whirl  
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm,  
 and I  
 Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and  
 ever.

## III

I came one day and sat among the  
 stones  
 Strewn in the entry of the moaning  
 cave ;  
 A morning air, sweet after rain, ran  
 over  
 The rippling levels of the lake, and  
 blew  
 Coolness and moisture and all smells  
 of bud  
 And foliage from the dark and drip-  
 ping woods  
 Upon my fever'd brows that shook  
 and throbb'd  
 From temple unto temple. To what  
 height

The day had grown I know not.  
 Then came on me  
 The hollow tolling of the bell, and  
 all <sup>10</sup>  
 The vision of the bier. As heretofore  
 I walk'd behind with one who veil'd  
 his brow.  
 Methought by slow degrees the sullen  
 bell  
 Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on  
 the shore  
 Sloped into louder surf. Those that  
 went with me,  
 And those that held the bier before  
 my face,  
 Moved with one spirit round about  
 the bay,  
 Trod swifter steps ; and while I  
 walk'd with these  
 In marvel at that gradual change,  
 I thought  
 Four bells instead of one began to  
 ring, <sup>20</sup>  
 Four merry bells, four merry mar-  
 riage-bells,  
 In clanging cadence jangling peal on  
 peal—  
 A long loud clash of rapid marriage-  
 bells.  
 Then these who led the van, and those  
 in rear,  
 Rush'd into dance, and like wild  
 Bacchanals  
 Fled onward to the steeple in the  
 woods.  
 I, too, was borne along and felt the  
 blast  
 Beat on my heated eyelids. All at  
 once  
 The front rank made a sudden halt ;  
 the bells  
 Lapsed into frightful stillness ; the  
 surge fell <sup>30</sup>  
 From thunder into whispers ; those  
 six maids  
 With shrieks and ringing laughter on  
 the sand  
 Threw down the bier ; the woods  
 upon the hill  
 Waved with a sudden gust that  
 sweeping down  
 Took the edges of the pall, and blew  
 it far  
 Until it hung, a little silver cloud  
 Over the sounding seas. I turn'd ;  
 my heart

Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the hand,  
 Waiting to see the settled countenance  
 Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading  
 flowers.<sup>40</sup>  
 But she from out her death-like chrysalis,  
 She from her bier, as into fresher life,  
 My sister, and my cousin, and my  
 love,  
 Leapt lightly clad in bridal white —  
 her hair  
 Studded with one rich Provence rose  
 — a light  
 Of smiling welcome round her lips —  
 her eyes  
 And cheeks as bright as when she  
 climb'd the hill.  
 One hand she reach'd to those that  
 came behind,  
 And while I mused nor yet endured to  
 take  
 So rich a prize, the man who stood  
 with me<sup>50</sup>  
 Stept gaily forward, throwing down  
 his robes,  
 And claspt her hand in his. Again  
 the bells  
 Jangled and clang'd; again the  
 stormy surf  
 Crash'd in the shingle; and the whirl-  
 ing rout  
 Led by those two rush'd into dance,  
 and fled  
 Wind-footed to the steeple in the  
 woods,  
 Till they were swallow'd in the leafy  
 bowers,  
 And I stood sole beside the vacant  
 bier.

There, there, my latest vision —  
 then the event!

## IV

THE GOLDEN SUPPER<sup>1</sup>

(*Another speaks*)

'He flies the event; he leaves the event  
 to me.  
 Poor Julian — how he rush'd away;  
 the bells,

<sup>1</sup> This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio. See Introduction, p. 2.

Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear  
 and heart —  
 But cast a parting glance at me, you  
 saw,  
 As who should say 'Continue.' Well,  
 he had  
 One golden hour — of triumph shall I  
 say?  
 Solace at least — before he left his  
 home.

Would you had seen him in that  
 hour of his!  
 He moved thro' all of it majestically —  
 Restrain'd himself quite to the close  
 — but now —<sup>10</sup>  
 Whether they *were* his lady's marriage-  
 bells,  
 Or prophets of them in his fantasy,  
 I never ask'd; but Lionel and the  
 girl  
 Were wedded, and our Julian came  
 again  
 Back to his mother's house among the  
 pines.  
 But these, their gloom, the mountains  
 and the Bay,  
 The whole land weigh'd him down as  
 Ætna does  
 The Giant of Mythology; he would  
 go,  
 Would leave the land for ever, and  
 had gone  
 Surely, but for a whisper, 'Go not  
 yet,'<sup>20</sup>  
 Some warning — sent divinely — as it  
 seem'd  
 By that which follow'd — but of this  
 I deem  
 As of the visions that he told — the  
 event  
 Glanced back upon them in his after  
 life,  
 And partly made them — tho' he knew  
 it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not  
 look at her —  
 No, not for months; but, when the  
 eleventh moon  
 After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,  
 Heard yet once more the tolling bell,  
 and said,  
 'Would you could toll me out of life!'  
 but found —<sup>30</sup>

All softly as his mother broke it to  
him —  
A crueller reason than a crazy ear  
For that low knell tolling his lady  
dead —  
Dead — and had lain three days with-  
out a pulse;  
All that look'd on her had pronounced  
her dead.  
And so they bore her — for in Julian's  
land  
They never nail a dumb head up in  
elm —  
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of  
heaven,  
And laid her in the vault of her own kin.

What did he then? not die — he is  
here and hale — <sup>40</sup>  
Not plunge headforemost from the  
mountain there,  
And leave the name of Lover's Leap,  
not he.  
He knew the meaning of the whisper  
now,  
Thought that he knew it. 'This, I  
stay'd for this;  
O Love, I have not seen you for so  
long!  
Now, now, will I go down into the  
grave,  
I will be all alone with all I love,  
And kiss her on the lips. She is his  
no more;  
The dead returns to me, and I go down  
To kiss the dead.'

The fancy stirr'd him so  
He rose and went, and, entering the  
dim vault <sup>51</sup>  
And making there a sudden light, be-  
held  
All round about him that which all  
will be.  
The light was but a flash, and went  
again.  
Then at the far end of the vault he saw  
His lady with the moonlight on her  
face;  
Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars  
Of black and bands of silver, which  
the moon  
Struck from an open grating overhead  
High in the wall, and all the rest of her  
Drown'd in the gloom and horror of  
the vault. <sup>61</sup>

'It was my wish,' he said, 'to pass,  
to sleep,  
To rest, to be with her — till the great  
day  
Peal'd on us with that music which  
rights all,  
And raised us hand in hand.' And  
kneeling there  
Down in the dreadful dust that once  
was man,  
'Dust,' as he said, 'that once was lov-  
ing hearts,  
Hearts that had beat with such a love  
as mine —  
Not such as mine, no, nor for such as  
her,' —  
He softly put his arm about her  
neck <sup>70</sup>  
And kiss'd her more than once, till  
helpless death  
And silence made him bold — nay, but  
I wrong him,  
He revered his dear lady even in  
death;  
But, placing his true hand upon her  
heart,  
'O you warm heart,' he moan'd, 'not  
even death  
Can chill you all at once' — then, start-  
ing, thought  
His dreams had come again. 'Do I  
wake or sleep?  
Or am I made immortal, or my  
love  
Mortal once more?' It beat — the  
heart — it beat;  
Faint — but it beat; at which his own  
began <sup>80</sup>  
To pulse with such a vehemence that  
it drown'd  
The feeble motion underneath his  
hand.  
But when at last his doubts were sat-  
isfied  
He raised her softly from the sepul-  
chre,  
And, wrapping her all over with the  
cloak  
He came in, and now striding fast, and  
now  
Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore  
Holding his golden burthen in his  
arms,  
So bore her thro' the solitary land  
Back to the mother's house where she  
was born. <sup>90</sup>

There the good mother's kindly  
 ministering,  
 With half a night's appliances, recall'd  
 Her fluttering life. She rais'd an eye  
 that ask'd  
 'Where?' till the things familiar to  
 her youth  
 Had made a silent answer; then she  
 spoke  
 Here! and how came I here?' and  
 learning it—  
 They told her somewhat rashly, as I  
 think—  
 At once began to wander and to  
 wail,  
 'Ay, but you know that you must give  
 me back.  
 Send! bid him come;' but Lionel was  
 away—  
 Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none  
 knew where.  
 'He casts me out,' she wept, 'and  
 goes'—a wail  
 That, seeming something, yet was no-  
 thing, born  
 Not from believing mind but shatter'd  
 nerve,  
 Yet haunting Julian, as her own re-  
 proof  
 At some precipitance in her burial.  
 Then, when her own true spirit had  
 return'd,  
 'O, yes, and you,' she said, 'and none  
 but you?  
 For you have given me life and love  
 again,  
 And none but you yourself shall tell  
 him of it,  
 And you shall give me back when he  
 returns.'  
 'Stay then a little,' answer'd Julian,  
 'here,  
 And keep yourself, none knowing, to  
 yourself;  
 And I will do your will. I may not  
 stay,  
 No, not an hour; but send me notice  
 of him  
 When he returns, and then will I re-  
 turn,  
 And I will make a solemn offering of  
 you  
 To him you love.' And faintly she  
 replied,  
 'And I will do *your* will, and none  
 shall know.'

Not know? with such a secret to be  
 known.  
 But all their house was old and loved<sup>120</sup>  
 them both,  
 And all the house had known the loves  
 of both,  
 Had died almost to serve them any  
 way,  
 And all the land was waste and soli-  
 tary.  
 And then he rode away; but after  
 this,  
 An hour or two, Camilla's travail came  
 Upon her, and that day a boy was born,  
 Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,  
 And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,<sup>130</sup>  
 There fever seized upon him. Myself  
 was then  
 Travelling that land, and meant to rest  
 an hour;  
 And sitting down to such a base repast,  
 It makes me angry yet to speak of it—  
 I heard a groaning overhead, and  
 climb'd  
 The moulder'd stairs—for everything  
 was vile—  
 And in a loft, with none to wait on  
 him,  
 Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,  
 Raving of dead men's dust and beating  
 hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,<sup>140</sup>  
 A flat malarian world of reed and rush!  
 But there from fever and my care of  
 him  
 Sprang up a friendship that may help  
 us yet.  
 For while we roam'd along the dreary  
 coast,  
 And waited for her message, piece by  
 piece  
 I learnt the drearier story of his life;  
 And, tho' he loved and honor'd Lionel,  
 Found that the sudden wail his lady  
 made  
 Dwelt in his fancy. Did he know her  
 worth,  
 Her beauty even? should he not be  
 taught,  
 Even by the price that others set upon<sup>150</sup>  
 it,  
 The value of that jewel he had to  
 guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we  
past,  
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind,  
the soul;  
*That* makes the sequel pure, tho' some  
of us  
Beginning at the sequel know no more.  
Not such am I; and yet I say the  
bird  
That will not hear my call, however  
sweet,  
But if my neighbor whistle answers  
him—<sup>160</sup>  
What matter? there are others in the  
wood.  
Yet when I saw her—and I thought  
him crazed,  
Tho' not with such a craziness as needs  
A cell and keeper—those dark eyes  
of hers—  
O, such dark eyes! and not her eyes  
alone,  
But all from these to where she touch'd  
on earth,  
For such a craziness as Julian's look'd  
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came  
To greet us, her young hero in her  
arms!<sup>170</sup>  
'Kiss him,' she said. 'You gave me  
life again.  
He, but for you, had never seen it  
once.  
His other father you! Kiss him, and  
then  
Forgive him, if his name be Julian  
too.'

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart!  
his own  
Sent such a flame into his face, I knew  
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him  
there.

But he was all the more resolved to  
go,  
And sent at once to Lionel, praying  
him,  
By that great love they both had  
borne the dead,<sup>180</sup>  
To come and revel for one hour with  
him  
Before he left the land for evermore;

And then to friends—they were not  
many—who lived  
Scatteringly about that lonely land of  
his,  
And bade them to a banquet of fare-  
wells.

And Julian made a solemn feast; I  
never  
Sat at a costlier, for all round his hall  
From column on to column, as in a  
wood,  
Not such as here—an equatorial one,  
Great garlands swung and blossom'd;  
and beneath,<sup>190</sup>  
Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of  
art,  
Chalice and salver, wines that, heaven  
knows when,  
Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten  
sun,  
And kept it thro' a hundred years of  
gloom,  
Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups  
Where nymph and god ran ever round  
in gold—  
Others of glass as costly—some with  
gems  
Movable and resettable at will,  
And trebling all the rest in value—  
Ah heavens!  
Why need I tell you all?—suffice to  
say<sup>200</sup>  
That whatsoever such a house as his,  
And his was old, has in it rare or fair  
Was brought before the guest. And  
they, the guests,  
Wonder'd at some strange light in  
Julian's eyes—  
I told you that he had his golden hour—  
And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd  
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his  
And that resolved self-exile from a land  
He never would revisit, such a feast  
So rich, so strange, and stranger even  
than rich,<sup>210</sup>  
But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the  
hall  
Two great funeral curtains, looping  
down,  
Parted a little ere they met the floor,  
About a picture of his lady, taken  
Some years before, and falling hid  
the frame.

And just above the parting was a  
lamp;  
So the sweet figure folded round with  
night  
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with  
a smile.

Well, then — our solemn feast — we  
ate and drank, <sup>220</sup>  
And might — the wines being of such  
nobleness —  
Have jested also, but for Julian's  
eyes,  
And something weird and wild about  
it all.  
What was it? for our lover seldom  
spoke,  
Scarce touch'd the meats, but ever  
and anon  
A priceless goblet with a priceless wine  
Arising show'd he drank beyond his  
use;  
And when the feast was near an end,  
he said:

'There is a custom in the Orient,  
friends —  
I read of it in Persia — when a man <sup>230</sup>  
Will honor those who feast with him,  
he brings  
And shows them whatsoever he ac-  
counts  
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,  
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may  
be.  
This custom' —

Pausing here a moment, all  
The guests broke in upon him with  
meeting hands  
And cries about the banquet — 'Beau-  
tiful!  
Who could desire more beauty at a  
feast?'

The lover answer'd: 'There is more  
than one  
Here sitting who desires it. Laud me  
not <sup>240</sup>  
Before my time, but hear me to the  
close.  
This custom steps yet further when  
the guest  
Is loved and honor'd to the uttermost.  
For after he hath shown him gems or  
gold,

He brings and sets before him in rich  
guise  
That which is thrice as beautiful as  
these,  
The beauty that is dearest to his  
heart —  
'O my heart's lord, would I could  
show you,' he says,  
'Even my heart too.' And I propose  
to-night  
To show you what is dearest to my  
heart, <sup>250</sup>  
And my heart too.

'But solve me first a doubt.  
I knew a man, not many years ago;  
He had a faithful servant, one who  
loved  
His master more than all on earth be-  
side.  
He falling sick, and seeming close on  
death,  
His master would not wait until he  
died,  
But bade his menials bear him from  
the door,  
And leave him in the public way to  
die.  
I knew another, not so long ago,  
Who found the dying servant, took  
him home, <sup>260</sup>  
And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved  
his life.  
I ask you now, should this first mas-  
ter claim  
His service, whom does it belong to?  
him  
Who thrust him out, or him who  
saved his life?'

This question, so flung down before  
the guests,  
And balanced either way by each, at  
length  
When some were doubtful how the  
law would hold,  
Was handed over by consent of all  
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of  
phrase. <sup>270</sup>  
And he, beginning languidly — his loss  
Weigh'd on him yet — but warming  
as he went,  
Glanced at the point of law, to pass  
it by,

Affirming that as long as either lived,  
By all the laws of love and grateful-  
ness,  
The service of the one so saved was due  
All to the saver—adding, with a smile,  
The first for many weeks—a semi-  
smile  
As at a strong conclusion—'body  
and soul  
And life and limbs, all his to work his  
will.' 280

Then Julian made a secret sign to me  
To bring Camilla down before them  
all.  
And crossing her own picture as she  
came,  
And looking as much lovelier as her-  
self  
Is lovelier than all others—on her head  
A diamond circlet, and from under this  
A veil, that seem'd no more than  
gilded air,  
Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern  
gauze  
With seeds of gold—so, with that  
grace of hers,  
Slow-moving as a wave against the  
wind, 290  
That flings a mist behind it in the sun—  
And bearing high in arms the mighty  
babe,  
The younger Julian, who himself was  
crown'd  
With roses, none so rosy as himself—  
And over all her babe and her the  
jewels  
Of many generations of his house  
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had deck'd  
them out  
As for a solemn sacrifice of love—  
'So she came in—I am long in telling  
it,  
I never yet beheld a thing so strange,  
Sad, sweet, and strange together—  
floated in— 301  
While all the guests in mute amaze-  
ment rose—  
And slowly pacing to the middle hall,  
Before the board, there paused and  
stood, her breast  
Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her  
feet,  
Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.  
But him she carried, him nor lights  
nor feast

Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men;  
who cared  
Only to use his own, and staring wide  
And hungering for the guilt and jew-  
ell'd world 310  
About him, look'd, as he is like to  
prove,  
When Julian goes, the lord of all he  
saw.

'My guests,' said Julian, 'you are  
honor'd now  
Even to the uttermost; in her behold  
Of all my treasures the most beautiful,  
Of all things upon earth the dearest to  
me;  
Then waving us a sign to seat our-  
selves,  
Led his dear lady to a chair of state.  
And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his  
face  
Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again  
Thrice in a second, felt him tremble  
too, 321  
And heard him muttering, 'So like, so  
like;  
She never had a sister. I knew none.  
Some cousin of his and hers—O God,  
so like!'  
And then he suddenly ask'd her if she  
were.  
She shook, and cast her eyes down,  
and was dumb.  
And then some other question'd if she  
came  
From foreign lands, and still she did  
not speak.  
Another, if the boy were hers; but she  
To all their queries answer'd not a  
word, 330  
Which made the amazement more, till  
one of them  
Said, shuddering, 'Her spectre!' But  
his friend  
Replied, in half a whisper, 'Not at  
least  
The spectre that will speak if spoken  
to.  
Terrible pity, if one so beautiful  
Prove, as I almost dread to find her,  
dumb!'

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd  
all:  
'She is but dumb, because in her you  
see



That faithful servant whom we spoke  
about,

Obedient to her second master now ;

Which will not last. I have here to-  
night a guest <sup>341</sup>

So bound to me by common love and  
loss—

What! shall I bind him more ? in his  
behalf,

Shall I exceed the Persian, giving  
him

That which of all things is the dearest  
to me,

Not only showing ? and he himself  
pronounced

That my rich gift is wholly mine to  
give.

‘Now all be dumb, and promise all  
of you

Not to break in on what I say by word  
Or whisper, while I show you all my  
heart.’ <sup>350</sup>

And then began the story of his love  
As here to-day, but not so wordily—  
The passionate moment would not  
suffer that—

Past thro’ his visions to the burial;  
thence

Down to this last strange hour in his  
own hall ;

And then rose up, and with him all  
his guests

Once more as by enchantment ; all but  
he,

Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell  
again,

And sat as if in chains—to whom he  
said :

‘Take my free gift, my cousin, for  
your wife ; <sup>360</sup>

And were it only for the giver’s sake,

And tho’ she seem so like the one you  
lost,

Yet cast her not away so suddenly,  
Lest there be none left here to bring  
her back.

I leave this land for ever.’ Here he  
ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one  
hand,

And bearing on one arm the noble babe,  
He slowly brought them both to Lion-  
nel.

And there the widower husband and  
dead wife

Rush’d each at each with a cry that  
rather seem’d <sup>370</sup>

For some new death than for a life  
renew’d ;

Whereat the very babe began to wail.  
At once they turn’d, and caught and  
brought him in

To their charm’d circle, and, half kill-  
ing him

With kisses, round him closed and  
claspt again.

But Lionel, when at last he freed him-  
self

From wife and child, and lifted up a  
face

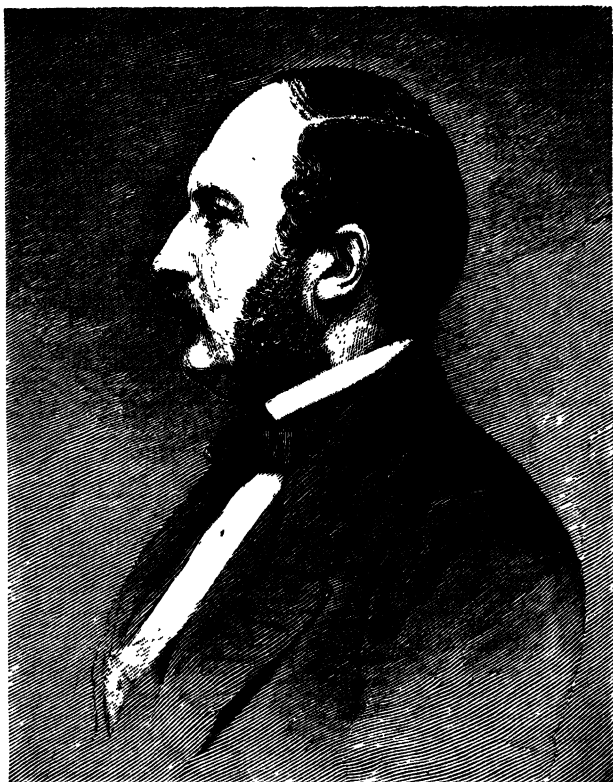
All over glowing with the sun of life,  
And love, and boundless thanks—the  
sight of this

So frighted our good friend that, turn-  
ing to me <sup>380</sup>

And saying, ‘It is over ; let us go’—  
There were our horses ready at the  
doors—

We bade them no farewell, but mount-  
ing these

He past for ever from his native land ,  
And I with him, my Julian, back to  
mine.



PRINCE ALBERT

# IDYLLS OF THE KING IN TWELVE BOOKS

*'Flos Regum Arthurus'* — JOSEPH OF EXETER

## DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory — since he held  
 them dear,  
 Perchance as finding there uncon-  
 sciously  
 Some image of himself — I dedicate,  
 I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —  
 These Idylls.

And indeed he seems to me  
 Scarce other than my king's ideal  
 knight,  
 'Who revered his conscience as his  
 king;  
 Whose glory was, redressing human  
 wrong;  
 Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd  
 to it;

Who loved one only and who clave to  
 her' —  
 Her — over all whose realms to their  
 last isle,  
 Commingled with the gloom of immi-  
 nent war,  
 The shadow of his loss drew like  
 eclipse,  
 Darkening the world. We have lost  
 him; he is gone.  
 We know him now; all narrow jeal-  
 ousies  
 Are silent, and we see him as he moved,  
 How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,  
 wise,  
 With what sublime repression of him-  
 self,  
 And in what limits, and how tenderly;  
 Not swaying to this faction or to  
 that;  
 Not making his high place the lawless  
 perch  
 Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-  
 ground  
 For pleasure; but thro' all this tract  
 of years  
 Wearing the white flower of a blame-  
 less life,  
 Before a thousand peering littlenesses,  
 In that fierce light which beats upon  
 a throne  
 And blackens every blot; for where  
 is he  
 Who dares foreshadow for an only  
 son  
 A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than  
 his?  
 Or how should England dreaming of  
 his sons  
 Hope more for these than some inher-  
 itance  
 Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
 Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
 Laborious for her people and her  
 poor —  
 Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler  
 day —  
 Far-sighted summoner of War and  
 Waste  
 To fruitful strifes and rivalries of  
 peace —  
 Sweet nature gilded by the gracious  
 gleam  
 Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
 Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince  
 indeed,

Beyond all titles, and a household  
 name,  
 Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the  
 Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but  
 still endure;  
 Break not, for thou art royal, but en-  
 dure,  
 Remembering all the beauty of that  
 star  
 Which shone so close beside thee that  
 ye made  
 One light together, but has past and  
 leaves  
 The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,  
 His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow  
 thee,  
 The love of all thy sons encompass  
 thee,  
 The love of all thy daughters cherish  
 thee,  
 The love of all thy people comfort  
 thee,  
 Till God's love set thee at his side  
 again!

### THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the king of Cameliard,  
 Had one fair daughter, and none other  
 child;  
 And she was fairest of all flesh on  
 earth,  
 Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur  
 came  
 Ruled in this isle and, ever waging  
 war  
 Each upon other, wasted all the land;  
 And still from time to time the heathen  
 host  
 Swarm'd over-seas, and harried what  
 was left.  
 And so there grew great tracts of wil-  
 derness,  
 Wherein the beast was ever more and  
 more,  
 But man was less and less, till Arthur  
 came.  
 For first Aurelius lived and fought and  
 died,

And after him King Uther fought and  
died,  
But either fail'd to make the kingdom  
one.  
And after these King Arthur for a  
space,  
And thro' the puissance of his Table  
Round,  
Drew all their petty princedoms under  
him,  
Their king and head, and made a realn  
and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was  
waste,  
Thick with wet woods, and many a  
beast therein,  
And none or few to scare or chase the  
beast;  
So that wild dog and wolf and boar  
and bear  
Came night and day, and rooted in the  
fields,  
And wallow'd in the gardens of the  
King.  
And ever and anon the wolf would  
steal  
The children and devour, but now and  
then,  
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her  
fierce teat  
To human sucklings; and the children,  
housed  
In her foul den, there at their meat  
would growl,  
And mock their foster-mother on four  
feet,  
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to  
wolf-like men,  
Worse than the wolves. And King  
Leodogran  
Groan'd for the Roman legions here  
again  
And Caesar's eagle. Then his brother  
king,  
Urien, assail'd him; last a heathen  
horde,  
Reddening the sun with smoke and  
earth with blood,  
And on the spike that split the mother's  
heart  
Spitting the child, brake on him, till,  
amazed,  
He knew not whither he should turn  
for aid.

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But — for he heard of Arthur newly  
crown'd,  
Tho' not without an uproar made by  
those  
Who cried, 'He is not Uther's son' —  
the King  
Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and help  
us thou!  
For here between the man and beast  
we die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed  
of arms,  
But heard the call and came; and  
Guinevere  
Stood by the castle walls to watch  
him pass;  
But since he neither wore on helm or  
shield  
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,  
But rode a simple knight among his  
knights,  
And many of these in richer arms than  
he,  
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she  
saw,  
One among many, tho' his face was  
bare.  
But Arthur, looking downward as he  
past,  
Felt the light of her eyes into his  
life  
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and  
pitch'd  
His tents beside the forest. Then he  
drave  
The heathen; after, slew the beast,  
and fell'd  
The forest, letting in the sun, and  
made  
Broad pathways for the hunter and  
the knight,  
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there.  
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the  
hearts  
Of those great lords and barons of his  
realm  
Flash'd forth and into war; for most  
of these,  
Colleaguings with a score of petty  
kings,  
Made head against him, crying: 'Who  
is he

That he should rule us ? who hath  
 proven him  
 King Uther's son ? for lo ! we look at  
 him,  
 And find nor face nor bearing, limbs  
 nor voice, <sup>70</sup>  
 Are like to those of Uther whom we  
 knew.  
 This is the son of Gorloïs, not the  
 King;  
 This is the son of Anton, not the  
 King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to  
 battle, felt  
 Cravall, and throes and agonies of the  
 life,  
 Desiring to be join'd with Guineverc,  
 And thinking as he rode : 'Her father  
 said  
 'That there between the man and beast  
 they die.  
 Shall I not lift her from this land of  
 beasts  
 Up to my throne and side by side  
 with me ? <sup>80</sup>  
 What happiness to reign a lonely  
 king,  
 Vext — O ye stars that shudder over  
 me,  
 O earth that soundest hollow under  
 me,  
 Vext with waste dreams ? for saving  
 I be join'd  
 To her that is the fairest under heaven,  
 I seem as nothing in the mighty  
 world,  
 And cannot will my will nor work my  
 work  
 Wholly, nor make myself in mine  
 own realm  
 Victor and lord. But were I join'd  
 with her,  
 Then might we live together as one  
 life, <sup>90</sup>  
 And reigning with one will in every-  
 thing  
 Have power on this dark land to  
 lighten it,  
 And power on this dead world to  
 make it live.'

Thereafter — as he speaks who tells  
 the tale —  
 When Arthur reach'd a field of battle  
 bright

With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the  
 world  
 Was all so clear about him that he  
 saw  
 The smallest rock far on the faintest  
 hill,  
 And even in high day the morning  
 star.  
 So when the King had set his banner  
 broad, <sup>100</sup>  
 At once from either side, with trum-  
 pet-blast,  
 And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto  
 blood,  
 The long-lanced battle let their horses  
 run.  
 And now the barons and the kings  
 prevail'd,  
 And now the King, as here and there  
 that war  
 Went swaying ; but the Powers who  
 walk the world  
 Made lightnings and great thunders  
 over him,  
 And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by  
 main might,  
 And mightier of his hands with every  
 blow,  
 And leading all his knighthood threw  
 the kings, <sup>110</sup>  
 Carádos, Urien, Cradlemon of Wales,  
 Claudius, and Clariance of Northum-  
 berland,  
 The King Brandagoras of Latangor,  
 With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,  
 And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a  
 voice  
 As dreadful as the shout of one who  
 sees  
 To one who sins, and deems himself  
 alone  
 And all the world asleep, they swerved  
 and brake  
 Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the  
 brands  
 That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho !  
 they yield !' <sup>120</sup>  
 So like a painted battle the war  
 stood  
 Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,  
 And in the heart of Arthur joy was  
 lord.  
 He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he  
 loved  
 And honor'd most. 'Thou dost not  
 doubt me King,

So well thine arm hath wrought for  
me to-day.'

'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire  
of God

Descends upon thee in the battle-field.  
I know thee for my King!' Whereat

the two,  
For each had warded either in the  
fight,

Swore on the field of death a deathless  
love.

And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God  
in man;

Let chance what will, I trust thee to  
the death.'

Then quickly from the foughten  
field he sent

Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
His new made knights, to King Leo-  
dogran,

Saying, 'If I in aught have served  
thee well,

Give me thy daughter Guinevere to  
wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran  
in heart

Debating — 'How should I that am a  
king,

However much he help me at my  
need,

Give my one daughter saving to a  
king,

And a king's son?' — lifted his voice,  
and call'd

A hoary man, his chamberlain, to  
whom

He trusted all things, and of him re-  
quired

His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught of  
Arthur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain  
and said:

'Sir King, there be but two old men  
that know;

And each is twice as old as I; and one  
is Merlin, the wise man that ever  
served

King Uther thro' his magic art, and  
one

Is Merlin's master — so they call him  
— Bleys,

Who taught him magic; but the  
scholar ran

Before the master, and so far that  
Bleys

Laid magic by, and sat him down,  
and wrote

All things and whatsoever Merlin  
did

In one great annal-book, where after-  
years

Will learn the secret of our Arthur's  
birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran re-  
plied:

'O friend, had I been holpen half as  
well

By this King Arthur as by thee to-  
day,

Then beast and man had had their  
share of me;

But summon here before us yet once  
more

Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him,  
the king said:

'I have seen the cuckoo chased by  
lesser fowl,

And reason in the chase; but where-  
fore now

Do these your lords stir up the heat  
of war,

Some calling Arthur born of Gorloës,  
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye your-  
selves,

I hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's  
son?'

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd,  
'Ay.'

Then Bedivere, the first of all his  
knights

Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,  
spake —

For bold in heart and act and word  
was he,

Whenever slander breathed against  
the King —

'Sir, there be many rumors on this  
head;

For there be those who hate him in  
their hearts,

Call him baseborn, and since his ways  
are sweet,

And theirs are bestial, hold him less  
than man;

And there be those who deem him  
 more than man,  
 And dream he dropt from heaven.  
 But my belief  
 In all this matter—so ye care to  
 learn—  
 Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's  
 time  
 The prince and warrior Gorlois, he  
 that held  
 Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,  
 Was wedded with a winsome wife,  
 Ygerne;  
 And daughters had she borne him, —  
 one whereof,  
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,  
 Bellicent,  
 Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved  
 To Arthur, — but a son she had not  
 borne.  
 And Uther cast upon her eyes of love;  
 But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,  
 So loathed the bright dishonor of his  
 love  
 That Gorlois and King Uther went to  
 war,  
 And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.  
 Then Uther in his wrath and heat be-  
 sieged  
 Ygerne within Tintagil, where her  
 men,  
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their  
 walls,  
 Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd  
 in,  
 And there was none to call to but him-  
 self.  
 So, compass'd by the power of the  
 king,  
 Enforced she was to wed him in her  
 tears,  
 And with a shameful swiftness; after-  
 ward,  
 Not many moons, King Uther died  
 himself,  
 Moaning and wailing for an heir to  
 rule  
 After him, lest the realm should go to  
 wrack.  
 And that same night, the night of the  
 new year,  
 By reason of the bitterness and grief  
 That vexed his mother, all before his  
 time  
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as  
 born

Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate  
 To Merlin, to be holden far apart  
 Until his hour should come, because  
 the lords  
 Of that fierce day were as the lords of  
 this,  
 Wild beasts, and surely would have  
 torn the child  
 Piecemeal among them, had they  
 known; for each  
 But sought to rule for his own self  
 and hand,  
 And many hated Uther for the sake  
 Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took  
 the child,  
 And gave him to Sir Anton, an old  
 knight  
 And ancient friend of Uther; and his  
 wife  
 Nursed the young prince, and rear'd  
 him with her own;  
 And no man knew. And ever since  
 the lords  
 Have foughten like wild beasts among  
 themselves,  
 So that the realm has gone to wrack;  
 but now,  
 This year, when Merlin — for his hour  
 had come —  
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him in  
 the hall,  
 Proclaiming, "Here is Uther's heir,  
 your king,"  
 A hundred voices cried: "Away with  
 him!  
 No king of ours! a son of Gorlois he,  
 Or else the child of Anton, and no  
 king,  
 Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro'  
 his craft,  
 And while the people clamor'd for a  
 king,  
 Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the  
 great lords  
 Banded, and so brake out in open war.  
 Then while the king debated with  
 himself  
 If Arthur were the child of shameful-  
 ness,  
 Or born the son of Gorlois after  
 death,  
 Or Uther's son and born before his  
 time,  
 Or whether there were truth in any-  
 thing

Said by these three, there came to  
 Cameliard,  
 With Gawain and young Modred, her  
 two sons,  
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Belli-  
 cent;  
 Whom as he could, not as he would,  
 the king  
 Made feast for, saying, as they sat at  
 meat:  
 'A doubtful throne is ice on summer  
 seas.  
 Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor  
 his men  
 Report him! Yea, but ye — think ye  
 this king —  
 So many those that hate him, and so  
 strong,  
 So few his knights, however brave  
 they be —  
 Hath body enow to hold his foemen  
 down?'

'O King,' she cried, 'and I will tell  
 thee: few,  
 Few, but all brave, all of one mind  
 with him;  
 For I was near him when the savage  
 yells  
 Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur  
 sat  
 Crowned on the dais, and his warriors  
 cried,  
 "Be thou the king, and we will work  
 thy will  
 Who love thee." Then the King in  
 low deep tones,  
 And simple words of great authority,  
 Bound them by so strait vows to his  
 own self  
 That when they rose, knighted from  
 kneeling, some  
 Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,  
 Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one  
 who wakes  
 Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

'But when he spake, and cheer'd his  
 Table Round  
 With large, divine, and comfortable  
 words,  
 Beyond my tongue to tell thee — I be-  
 held  
 From eye to eye thro' all their Order  
 flash  
 A momentary likeness of the King; 270

And ere it left their faces, thro' the  
 cross  
 And those around it and the Crucified,  
 Down from the casement over Arthur,  
 smote  
 Flame-color, vert, and azure, in three  
 rays,  
 One falling upon each of three fair  
 queens  
 Who stood in silence near his throne,  
 the friends  
 Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with  
 bright  
 Sweet faces, who will help him at his  
 need.

'And there I saw mage Merlin,  
 whose vast wit  
 And hundred winters are but as the  
 hands  
 Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege. 280

'And near him stood the Lady of  
 the Lake,  
 Who knows a subtler magic than his  
 own —  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
 derful.  
 She gave the King his huge cross-  
 hilted sword,  
 Whereby to drive the heathen out. A  
 mist  
 Of incense curl'd about her, and her  
 face  
 Wellnigh was hidden in the minster  
 gloom;  
 But there was heard among the holy  
 hymns  
 A voice as of the waters, for she dwells  
 Down in a deep — calm, whatsoever  
 storms  
 May shake the world — and when the  
 surface rolls,  
 Hath power to walk the waters like  
 our Lord.

'There likewise I beheld Excalibur  
 Before him at his crowning borne, the  
 sword  
 That rose from out the bosom of the  
 lake,  
 And Arthur row'd across and took it —  
 rich  
 With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,  
 Bewildering heart and eye — the blade  
 so bright



That men are blinded by it—on one  
 side,  
 Graven in the oldest tongue of all this  
 world,  
 "Take me," but turn the blade and ye  
 shall see,  
 And written in the speech ye speak  
 yourself,  
 "Cast me away!" And sad was  
 Arthur's face  
 Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd  
 him,  
 "Take thou and strike! the time to  
 cast away  
 Is yet far-off." So this great brand the  
 king  
 Took, and by this will beat his foemen  
 down.

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but  
 thought  
 To sift his doubtings to the last, and  
 ask'd,  
 Fixing full eyes of question on her  
 face,  
 'The swallow and the swift are near  
 akin,  
 But thou art closer to this noble  
 prince,  
 Being his own dear sister;' and she  
 said,  
 'Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am  
 I;'  
 'And therefore Arthur's sister?' ask'd  
 the king.  
 She answer'd, 'These be secret things,'  
 and sign'd  
 To those two sons to pass, and let them  
 be.  
 And Gawain went, and breaking into  
 song  
 Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying  
 hair  
 Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he  
 saw;  
 But Modred laid his ear beside the  
 doors,  
 And there half-heard—the same that  
 afterward  
 Struck for the throne, and striking  
 found his doom.

And then the Queen made answer:  
 'What know I?  
 For dark my mother was in eyes and  
 hair,

And dark in hair and eyes am I; and  
 dark  
 Was Gorlois; yea, and dark was Uther  
 too,  
 Wellnigh to blackness; but this king  
 is fair  
 Beyond the race of Britons and of  
 men.  
 Moreover, always in my mind I hear  
 A cry from out the dawning of my life,  
 A mother weeping, and I hear her say,  
 "O that ye had some brother, pretty  
 one,  
 To guard thee on the rough ways of  
 the world."

'Ay,' said the king, 'and hear ye  
 such a cry?  
 But when did Arthur chance upon thee  
 first?'

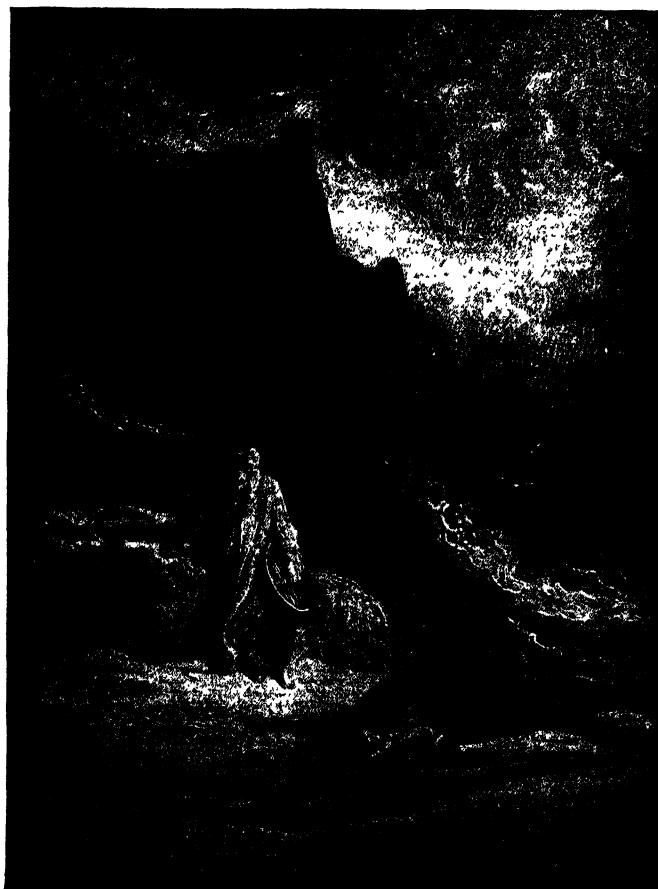
'O King!' she cried, 'and I will tell  
 thee true.  
 He found me first when yet a little  
 maid.  
 Beaten I had been for a little fault  
 Whereof I was not guilty; and out I  
 ran  
 And flung myself down on a bank of  
 heath,  
 And hated this fair world and all  
 therein,  
 And wept, and wish'd that I were  
 dead; and he—  
 I know not whether of himself he  
 came,  
 Or brought by Merlin, who, they say,  
 can walk  
 Unseen at pleasure—he was at my  
 side,  
 And spake sweet words, and com-  
 forted my heart,  
 And dried my tears, being a child  
 with me.  
 And many a time he came, and ever-  
 more  
 As I grew greater grew with me; and  
 sad  
 At times he seem'd, and sad with him  
 was I,  
 Stern too at times, and then I loved  
 him not,  
 But sweet again, and then I loved  
 him well.  
 And now of late I see him less and  
 less,

But those first days had golden hours  
for me,  
For then I surely thought he would  
be king.

'But let me tell thee now another  
tale:  
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as  
they say,  
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,  
To hear him speak before he left his  
life.

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Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay  
the mage;  
And when I enter'd told me that him-  
self  
And Merlin ever served about the king,  
Uther, before he died; and on the  
night  
When Uther in Tintagil past away  
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the  
two  
Left the still king, and passing forth  
to breathe,



“A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet”

Then from the castle gateway by the  
 chasm  
 Descending thro' the dismal night—a  
 night 370  
 In which the bounds of heaven and  
 earth were lost—  
 Beheld, so high upon the dreary  
 deeps  
 It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape  
 thereof  
 A dragon wing'd, and all from stem  
 to stern  
 Bright with a shining people on the  
 decks,  
 And gone as soon as seen. And then  
 the two  
 Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the  
 great sea fall,  
 Wave after wave, each mightier than  
 the last,  
 Till last, a ninth one, gathering half  
 the deep  
 And full of voices, slowly rose and  
 plunged 380  
 Roaring, and all the wave was in a  
 flame;  
 And down the wave and in the flame  
 was borne  
 A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's  
 feet,  
 Who stooped and caught the babe, and  
 cried, "The King!  
 Here is an heir for Uther!" And the  
 fringe  
 Of that great breaker, sweeping up  
 the strand,  
 Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the  
 word,  
 And all at once all round him rose in  
 fire,  
 So that the child and he were clothed  
 in fire.  
 And presently thereafter follow'd calm,  
 Free sky and stars. "And this same  
 child," he said, 391  
 "Is he who reigns; nor could I part  
 in peace  
 Till this were told." And saying this  
 the seer  
 Went thro' the strait and dreadful  
 pass of death,  
 Not ever to be question'd any more  
 Save on the further side; but when I  
 met  
 Merlin, and ask'd him if these things  
 were truth—

The shining dragon and the naked  
 child  
 Descending in the glory of the seas—  
 He laugh'd as is his wont, and an-  
 swer'd me 400  
 In riddling triplets of old time, and  
 said:—

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the  
 sky!  
 A young man will be wiser by and by;  
 An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the  
 lea!  
 And truth is this to me, and that to thee;  
 And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

"Rain, sun, and rain! and the free  
 blossom blows;  
 Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who  
 knows?  
 From the great deep to the great deep he  
 goes." 140

'So Merlin riddling anger'd me;  
 but thou  
 Fear not to give this King thine only  
 child,  
 Guinevere; so great bards of him will  
 sing  
 Hereafter, and dark sayings from of old  
 Ranging and ringing thro' the minds  
 of men,  
 And echo'd by old folk beside their  
 fires  
 For comfort after their wage-work is  
 done,  
 Speak of the King; and Merlin in our  
 time  
 Hath spoken also, not in jest, and  
 sworn  
 Tho' men may wound him that he  
 will not die, 420  
 But pass, again to come, and then or  
 now  
 Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,  
 Till these and all men hail him for  
 their king.'

She spake and King Leodogran re-  
 joiced,  
 But musing 'Shall I answer yea or  
 nay?  
 Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and  
 slept, and saw,  
 Dreaming, a slope of land that ever  
 grew,

Field after field, up to a height, the  
 peak  
 Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom  
 king,  
 Now looming, and now lost; and on  
 the slope<sup>430</sup>  
 The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd  
 was driven,  
 Fire glimpsed; and all the land from  
 roof and rick,  
 In drifts of smoke before a rolling  
 wind,  
 Stream'd to the peak, and mingled  
 with the haze  
 And made it thicker; while the phan-  
 tom king  
 Sent out at times a voice; and here or  
 there  
 Stood one who pointed toward the  
 voice, the rest  
 Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king  
 of ours,  
 No son of Uther, and no king of ours;'  
 Till with a wink his dream was  
 changed, the haze<sup>440</sup>  
 Descended, and the solid earth be-  
 came  
 As nothing, but the King stood out in  
 heaven,  
 Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and  
 sent  
 Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
 Back to the court of Arthur answer-  
 ing yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior  
 whom he loved  
 And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to  
 ride forth  
 And bring the Queen, and watch'd  
 him from the gates;  
 And Lancelot past away among the  
 flowers—  
 For then was latter April—and re-  
 turn'd<sup>450</sup>  
 Among the flowers, in May, with  
 Guinevere.  
 To whom arrived, by Dubric the high  
 saint,  
 Chief of the church in Britain, and  
 before  
 The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the  
 King  
 That morn was married, while in  
 stainless white,  
 The fair beginners of a nobler time,

And glorying in their vows and him,  
 his knights  
 Stood round him, and rejoicing in his  
 joy.  
 Far shone the fields of May thro' open  
 door,  
 The sacred altar blossom'd white with  
 May,<sup>460</sup>  
 The sun of May descended on their  
 King,  
 They gazed on all earth's beauty in  
 their Queen,  
 Roll'd incense, and there past along  
 the hymns  
 A voice as of the waters, while the two  
 Sware at the shrine of Christ a death-  
 less love.  
 And Arthur said, 'Behold, thy doom  
 is mine.  
 Let chance what will, I love thee to  
 the death!'  
 To whom the Queen replied with  
 drooping eyes,  
 'King and my lord, I love thee to the  
 death!'  
 And holy Dubric spread his hands  
 and spake:<sup>470</sup>  
 'Reign ye, and live and love, and  
 make the world  
 Other, and may thy Queen be one  
 with thee,  
 And all this Order of thy Table Round  
 Fulfil the boundless purpose of their  
 King!'

So Dubric said; but when they left  
 the shrine  
 Great lords from Rome before the  
 portal stood,  
 In scornful stillness gazing as they  
 past;  
 Then while they paced a city all on  
 fire  
 With sun and cloth of gold, the trum-  
 pets blew,  
 And Arthur's knighthood sang before  
 the King:—<sup>480</sup>

'Blow trumpet, for the world is white  
 with May!  
 Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd  
 away!  
 Blow thro' the living world—"Let the  
 King reign!"

'Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's  
 realm?

Flash brand and lance, fall battle-axe upon  
helm,  
Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the  
King reign!

'Strike for the King and live! his knights  
have heard  
That God hath told the King a secret  
word.  
Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the  
King reign!

Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the  
dust.  
Blow trumpet! live the strength, and die the  
lust!  
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the  
King reign!

'Strike for the King and die! and if thou  
diest,  
The King is king, and ever wills the high-  
est.  
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the  
King reign!

'Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his  
May!  
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by  
day!  
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the  
King reign!

'The King will follow Christ, and we the  
King,  
In whom high God hath breathed a secret  
thing.  
Fall battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the  
King reign!'

So sang the knighthood, moving to  
their hall.  
There at the banquet those great lords  
from Rome,  
The slowly-fading mistress of the  
world,  
Strode in and claim'd their tribute as  
of yore.  
But Arthur spake: 'Behold, for these  
have sworn  
To wage my wars, and worship me  
their King;  
The old order changeth, yielding place  
to new,  
And we that fight for our fair father  
Christ,  
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and  
old  
To drive the heathen from your Roman  
wall,  
No tribute will we pay.' So those  
great lords  
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove  
with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for  
a space  
Were all one will, and thro' that  
strength the King  
Drew in the petty principdoms under  
him,  
Fought, and in twelve great battles  
overcame  
The heathen hordes, and made a realm  
and reign'd.

### THE ROUND TABLE

GARETH AND LYNETTE  
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT  
GERAINT AND ENID  
BALIN AND BALAN  
MERLIN AND VIVIEN

LANCELOT AND ELAINE  
THE HOLY GRAIL  
PELLEAS AND ETARRE  
THE LAST TOURNAMENT  
GUINEVERE

#### GARETH AND LYNETTE

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,  
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful  
spring  
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted  
pine  
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd  
away.  
How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as  
a false knight

Or evil king before my lance, if  
lance  
Were mine to use — O senseless cata-  
ract,  
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy —  
And yet thou art but swollen with cold  
snows  
And mine is living blood. Thou dost  
His will,  
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I  
that know,

Have strength and wit, in my good  
 mother's hall  
 Linger with vacillating obedience,  
 Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and  
 whistled to—  
 Since the good mother holds me still  
 a child!  
 Good mother is bad mother unto  
 me!  
 A worse were better; yet no worse  
 would I.  
 Heaven yield her for it, but in me put  
 force  
 To weary her ears with one continuous  
 prayer,  
 Until she let me fly discharg'd to  
 sweep  
 In ever-highering eagle-circles up 21  
 To the great Sun of Glory, and thence  
 swoop  
 Down upon all things base, and dash  
 them dead,  
 A knight of Arthur, working out his  
 will,  
 To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain,  
 when he came  
 With Modred hither in the summer-  
 time,  
 Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven  
 knight.  
 Modred for want of worthier was the  
 judge.  
 Then I so shook him in the saddle, he  
 said,  
 "Thou hast half prevail'd against me,"  
 said so—he— 30  
 Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was  
 mute,  
 For he is always sullen—what care I?

And Gareth went, and hovering  
 round her chair  
 Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me still  
 the child,  
 Sweet mother, do ye love the child?'  
 She laugh'd,  
 'Thou art but a wild-goose to question  
 it.'  
 'Then, mother, an ye love the child,'  
 he said,  
 'Being a goose and rather tame than  
 wild,  
 Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-  
 beloved,  
 An 't were but of the goose and golden  
 eggs.'

40

And Gareth answer'd her with kin-  
 dling eyes:  
 'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg  
 of mine  
 Was finer gold than any goose can  
 lay;  
 For this an eagle, a royal eagle, laid  
 Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a  
 palm  
 As glitters gilded in thy Book of  
 Hours.  
 And there was ever haunting round  
 the palm  
 A lusty youth, but poor, who often  
 saw  
 The splendor sparkling from aloft,  
 and thought,  
 "An I could climb and lay my hand  
 upon it, 50  
 Then were I wealthier than a leash of  
 kings."  
 But ever when he reach'd a hand to  
 climb,  
 One that had loved him from his child-  
 hood caught  
 And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou  
 break thy neck,  
 I charge thee by my love," and so the  
 boy,  
 Sweet mother, neither clomb nor brake  
 his neck,  
 But brake his very heart in pining for  
 it,  
 And past away.'

To whom the mother said,  
 'True love, sweet son, had risk'd him-  
 self and climb'd,  
 And handed down the golden treasure  
 to him.' 60

And Gareth answer'd her with kin-  
 dling eyes:  
 'Gold? said I gold?—ay then, why  
 he, or she,  
 Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world  
 Had ventured—had the thing I spake  
 of been  
 Mere gold—but this was all of that  
 true steel  
 Whereof they forged the brand Excali-  
 bur,  
 And lightnings play'd about it in the  
 storm,  
 And all the little fowl were flurried at  
 it,

And there were cries and clashings in  
the nest,  
That sent him from his senses. Let  
me go.' 70

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and  
said :

'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?

Lo, where thy father Lot beside the  
hearth

Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd  
out !

For ever since when traitor to the King  
He fought against him in the barons'  
war,

And Arthur gave him back his terri-  
tory,

His age hath slowly droopt, and now  
lies there

A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburi-  
able,

No more ; nor sees, nor hears, nor  
speaks, nor knows. 80

And both thy brethren are in Arthur's  
hall,

Albeit neither loved with that full  
love

I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love.  
Stay therefore thou ; red berries charm

the bird,  
And thee, mine innocent, the jousts,

the wars,  
Who never knewest finger-ache, nor

pang  
Of wrench'd or broken limb—an often

chance  
In those brain-stunning shocks, and

tourney-falls,  
Frights to my heart. But stay ; follow

the deer  
By these tall firs and our fast-falling

burns ; 90  
So make thy manhood mightier day

by day.  
Sweet is the chase ; and I will seek

thee out  
Some comfortable bride and fair, to

grace  
Thy climbing life, and cherish my

prone year,  
Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness

I know not thee, myself, nor anything.  
Stay, my best son ! ye are yet more

boy than man.

Then Gareth : ' An ye hold me yet  
for child,

Hear yet once more the story of the  
child.

For, mother, there was once a king,  
like ours. 100

The prince his heir, when tall and  
marriageable,

Ask'd for a bride ; and thereupon the  
king

Set two before him. One was fair,  
strong, arm'd —

But to be won by force—and many  
men

Desired her ; one, good lack, no man  
desired.

And these were the conditions of the  
king :

That save he won the first by force,  
he needs

Must wed that other, whom no man  
desired,

A red-faced bride who knew herself so  
vile

That evermore she long'd to hide her-  
self, 110

Nor fronted man or woman, eye to  
eye —

Yea—some she cleaved to, but they  
died of her.

And one — they call'd her Fame ; and  
one — O mother,

How can ye keep me tether'd to you ?  
— Shame.

Man am I grown, a man's work must  
I do.

Follow the deer ? follow the Christ,  
the King,

Live pure, speak true, right wrong,  
follow the King —

Else, wherefore born ?'

To whom the mother said :  
' Sweet son, for there be many who

deem him not,  
Or will not deem him, wholly proven

king — 120  
Albeit in mine own heart I knew him

King  
When I was frequent with him in my

youth,  
And heard him kingly speak, and

doubted him  
No more than he, himself ; but felt

him mine,

Of closest kin to me. Yet — wilt thou  
leave  
Thine easeful bidding here, and risk  
thine all,  
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven  
king?  
Stay, till the cloud that settles round  
his birth  
Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet  
son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly: 'Not  
an hour,<sup>130</sup>  
So that ye yield me — I will walk thro'  
fire,  
Mother, to gain it — your full leave to  
go.  
Not proven, who swept the dust of  
ruin'd Rome  
From off the threshold of the realm,  
and crush'd  
The idolaters, and made the people  
free?  
Who should be king save him who  
makes us free?'

So when the Queen, who long had  
sought in vain  
To break him from the intent to which  
he grew,  
Found her son's will unwaveringly  
one,  
She answer'd craftily: 'Will ye walk  
thro' fire?<sup>140</sup>  
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed  
the smoke.  
Ay, go then, an ye must; only one  
proof,  
Before thou ask the King to make  
thee knight,  
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,  
Thy mother, — I demand.'

And Gareth cried:  
'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.  
Nay — quick! the proof to prove me  
to the quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking  
at him:  
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to  
Arthur's hall,  
And hire thyself to serve for meats  
and drinks<sup>150</sup>  
Among the scullions and the kitchen-  
knaves,

And those that hand the dish across  
the bar.  
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any  
one.  
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth  
and a day.'

For so the Queen believed that when  
her son  
Beheld his only way to glory lead  
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassal  
age,  
Her own true Gareth was too princely-  
proud  
To pass thereby; so should he rest  
with her,  
Closed in her castle from the sound of  
arms.<sup>160</sup>

Silent awhile was Gareth, then re-  
plied:  
'The thrall in person may be free in  
soul,  
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son  
am I,  
And, since thou art my mother, must  
obey.  
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;  
For hence will I, disguised, and hire  
myself  
To serve with scullions and with  
kitchen-knives;  
Nor tell my name to any — no, not the  
King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mo-  
ther's eye  
Full of the wistful fear that he would  
go.<sup>170</sup>  
And turning toward him wheresoe'er  
he turn'd,  
Perplex his outward purpose, till an  
hour  
When, waken'd by the wind which  
with full voice  
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on  
to dawn,  
He rose, and out of slumber calling  
two  
That still had tended on him from his  
birth,  
Before the wakeful mother heard him,  
went.

The three were clad like tillers of  
the soil.



Southward they set their faces. The  
birds made  
Melody on branch and melody in mid  
air.<sup>180</sup>  
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd  
into green,  
And the live green had kindied into  
flowers,  
For it was past the time of Easter-day.

So, when their feet were planted on  
the plain  
That broaden'd toward the base of  
Camelot,  
Far off they saw the silver-misty  
morn  
Rolling her smoke about the royal  
mount,  
That rose between the forest and the  
field.  
At times the summit of the high city  
flash'd;  
At times the spires and turrets half-  
way down<sup>190</sup>  
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the  
great gate shone  
Only, that open'd on the field below;  
Anon, the whole fair city had disap-  
pear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth  
were amazed,  
One crying, 'Let us go no further,  
lord;  
Here is a city of enchanters, built  
By fairy kings.' The second echo'd  
him,  
'Lord, we have heard from our wise  
man at home  
To northward, that this king is not  
the King,  
But only changeling out of Fairyland,  
Who drave the heathen hence by sor-  
cery<sup>201</sup>  
And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first  
again,  
'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,  
But all a vision.'

Gareth answer'd them  
With laughter, swearing he had gla-  
mour enow  
In his own blood, his princedom,  
youth, and hopes,  
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian  
sea;

So push'd them all unwilling toward  
the gate.  
And there was no gate like it under  
heaven.  
For barefoot on the keystone, which  
was lined<sup>210</sup>  
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,  
The Lady of the Lake stood; all her  
dress  
Wept from her sides as water flowing  
away;  
But like the cross her great and goodly  
arms  
Stretch'd under all the cornice and up-  
held.  
And drops of water fell from either  
hand;  
And down from one a sword was  
hung, from one  
A censer, either worn with wind and  
storm;  
And o'er her breast floated the sacred  
fish;  
And in the space to left of her, and  
right,<sup>220</sup>  
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices  
done,  
New things and old co-twisted, as if  
Time  
Were nothing, so inveterately that  
men  
Were giddy gazing there; and over  
all  
High on the top were those three  
queens, the friends  
Of Arthur, who should help him at  
his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long  
a space  
Stared at the figures that at last it  
seem'd  
The dragon-boughts and elvish em-  
blemings  
Began to move, seethe, twine, and  
curl. They call'd<sup>230</sup>  
To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is  
alive.'

And Gareth likewise on them fixt  
his eyes  
So long that even to him they seem'd  
to move.  
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.  
Back from the gate started the three,  
to whom

From out thereunder came an ancient  
man,  
Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye,  
my sons?'

Then Gareth: 'We be tillers of the  
soil,  
Who leaving share in furrow come to  
see  
The glories of our King; but these,  
my men, — 240  
Your city moved so weirdly in the  
mist—  
Doubt if the King be king at all, or  
come  
From Fairyland; and whether this be  
built  
By magic, and by fairy kings and  
queens;  
Or whether there be any city at all,  
Or all a vision; and this music now  
Hath scared them both, but tell thou  
these the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer,  
playing on him  
And saying: 'Son, I have seen the  
good ship sail  
Keel upward, and mast downward,  
in the heavens, 250  
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air;  
And here is truth, but an it please  
thee not,  
Take thou the truth as thou hast told  
it me.  
For truly, as thou sayest, a fairy king  
And fairy queens have built the city,  
son;  
They came from out a sacred moun-  
tain-cleft  
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in  
hand,  
And built it to the music of their  
harps.  
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted,  
son,  
For there is nothing in it as it seems  
Saving the King; tho' some there be  
that hold 261  
The King a shadow, and the city real.  
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so  
thou pass  
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou  
become  
A thrall to his enchantments, for the  
King

Will bind thee by such vows as is a  
shame  
A man should not be bound by, yet  
the which  
No man can keep; but, so thou dread  
to swear,  
Pass not beneath this gateway, but  
abide  
Without, among the cattle of the  
field. 270  
For an ye heard a music, like enow  
They are building still, seeing the city  
is built  
To music, therefore never built at  
all,  
And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake  
Anger'd: 'Old master, reverence  
thine own beard  
That looks as white as utter truth,  
and seems  
Wellnigh as long as thou art statured  
tall!  
Why mockest thou the stranger that  
hath been  
To thee fair-spoken?'

But the Seer replied:  
'Know ye not then the Riddling of  
the Bards: 280  
"Confusion, and illusion, and relation,  
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion"?  
I mock thee not but as thou mockest  
me,  
And all that see thee, for thou art not  
who  
Thou seemest, but I know thee who  
thou art.  
And now thou goest up to mock the  
King.  
Who cannot brook the shadow of any  
lie.'

Unmockingly the mocker ending  
here  
Turn'd to the right, and past along  
the plain;  
Whom Gareth looking after said:  
'My men, 290  
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost  
Here on the threshold of our enter-  
prise.  
Let love be blamed for it, not she,  
nor I.  
Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer  
 He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd  
 with his twain  
 Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces  
 And stately, rich in emblem and the  
 work  
 Of ancient kings who did their days  
 in stone;  
 Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at  
 Arthur's court,  
 Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and  
 everywhere,  
 At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with les-  
 sening peak  
 And pinnacle, and had made it spire  
 to heaven.  
 And ever and anon a knight would  
 pass  
 Outward, or inward to the hall; his  
 arms  
 Clash'd, and the sound was good to  
 Gareth's ear.  
 And out of bower and casement shyly  
 glanced  
 Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars  
 of love;  
 And all about a healthful people slept  
 As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending  
 heard  
 A voice, the voice of Arthur, and be-  
 held  
 Far over heads in that long-vaulted  
 hall  
 The splendor of the presence of the  
 King  
 Throned, and delivering doom — and  
 look'd no more —  
 But felt his young heart hammering  
 in his ears,  
 And thought, 'For this half-shadow  
 of a lie  
 The truthful King will doom me  
 when I speak.'  
 Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find  
 Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor  
 one  
 Nor other, but in all the listening  
 eyes  
 Of those tall knights that ranged  
 about the throne  
 Clear honor shining like the dewy star  
 Of dawn, and faith in their great  
 King, with pure  
 Affection, and the light of victory,

And glory gain'd, and evermore to  
 gain.

Then came a widow crying to the  
 King:  
 'A boon, Sir King! Thy father,  
 Uther, reft  
 From my dead lord a field with vio-  
 lence;  
 For howso'er at first he proffer'd  
 gold,  
 Yet, for the field was pleasant in our  
 eyes,  
 We yielded not; and then he reft us  
 of it  
 Perforce and left us neither gold nor  
 field.'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye?  
 gold or field?'  
 'To whom the woman weeping, 'Nay,  
 my lord,  
 The field was pleasant in my hus-  
 band's eye.'

And Arthur: 'Have thy pleasant  
 field again,  
 And thrice the gold for Uther's use  
 thereof,  
 According to the years. No boon is  
 here,  
 But justice, so thy say be proven  
 true.  
 Accurs'd, who from the wrongs his  
 father did  
 Would shape himself a right!'

And while she past,  
 Came yet another widow crying to  
 him:  
 'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy,  
 King, am I.  
 With thine own hand thou slewest  
 my dear lord,  
 A knight of Uther in the barons'  
 war,  
 When Lot and many another rose and  
 fought  
 Against thee, saying thou wert basely  
 born.  
 I held with these, and loathe to ask  
 thee aught.  
 Yet lo! my husband's brother had my  
 son  
 Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved  
 him dead.

And standeth seized of that inheritance  
Which thou that slewest the sire hast  
left the son.  
So, tho' I scarce can ask it thee for  
hate,  
Grant me some knight to do the battle  
for me,  
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for  
my son.'

Then strode a good knight forward,  
crying to him,  
'A boon, Sir King! I am her kins-  
man, I.  
Give me to right her wrong, and slay  
the man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal,  
and cried,  
'A boon, Sir King! even that thou  
grant her none, <sup>360</sup>  
This railer, that bath mock'd thee in  
full hall —  
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve  
and gag.'

But Arthur: 'We sit King, to help  
the wrong'd  
Thro' all our realm. The woman  
loves her lord.  
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves  
and hates!  
The kings of old had doom'd thee to  
the flames;  
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged  
thee dead,  
And Uther slit thy tongue; but get  
thee hence —  
Lest that rough humor of the kings of  
old  
Return upon me! Thou that art her  
kin, <sup>370</sup>  
Go likewise; lay him low and slay  
him not,  
But bring him here, that I may judge  
the right,  
According to the justice of the King.  
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless  
King  
Who lived and died for men, the man  
shall die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of  
Mark,  
A name of evil savor in the land,

The Cornish king. In either hand he  
bore  
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as  
shines  
A field of charlock in the sudden  
sun <sup>380</sup>  
Between two showers, a cloth of  
palest gold,  
Which down he laid before the throne,  
and knelt,  
Delivering that his lord, the vassal  
king,  
Was even upon his way to Camelot;  
For having heard that Arthur of his  
grace  
Had made his goodly cousin Tristram  
knight,  
And, for himself was of the greater  
state,  
Being a king, he trusted his liege-  
lord  
Would yield him this large honor all  
the more;  
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth  
of gold, <sup>390</sup>  
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth,  
to rend  
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.  
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The  
goodly knight!  
What! shall the shield of Mark stand  
among these?'  
For, midway down the side of that  
long hall,  
A stately pile, — whereof along the  
front,  
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and  
some blank,  
There ran a treble range of stony  
shields, —  
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the  
hearth. <sup>400</sup>  
And under every shield a knight was  
named.  
For this was Arthur's custom in his  
hall:  
When some good knight had done one  
noble deed,  
His arms were carven only; but if  
twain,  
His arms were blazon'd also; but if  
none,  
The shield was blank and bare, with  
out a sign

Saving the name beneath. And  
 Gareth saw  
 The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and  
 bright,  
 And Modred's blank as death; and  
 Arthur cried  
 To rend the cloth and cast it on the  
 hearth. 410

'More like are we to reave him of  
 his crown  
 Than make him knight because men  
 call him king.  
 The kings we found, ye know we  
 stay'd their hands  
 From war among themselves, but left  
 them kings;  
 Of whom were any bounteous, merci-  
 ful,  
 Truth-speaking, brave, good livers,  
 them we enroll'd  
 Among us, and they sit within our hall.  
 But Mark hath tarnish'd the great  
 name of king,  
 As Mark would sully the low state of  
 churl;  
 And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of  
 gold, 420  
 Return, and meet, and hold him from  
 our eyes,  
 Lest we should lap him up in cloth of  
 lead,  
 Silenced for ever — craven — a man of  
 plots,  
 Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside  
 ambushings —  
 No fault of thine; let Kay the senes-  
 chal  
 Look to thy wants, and send thee satis-  
 fied —  
 Accurs'd, who strikes nor lets the  
 hand be seen!'

And many another suppliant crying  
 came  
 With noise of ravage wrought by  
 beast and man,  
 And evermore a knight would ride  
 away. 430

Last, Gareth leaning both hands  
 heavily  
 Down on the shoulders of the twain,  
 his men,  
 Approach'd between them toward the  
 King, and ask'd,

'A boon, Sir King,' — his voice was  
 all ashamed, —  
 'For see ye not how weak and hunger-  
 worn  
 I seem — leaning on these? grant me  
 to serve  
 For meat and drink among thy kitchen-  
 knaves  
 A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek  
 my name.  
 Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King :  
 'A goodly youth and worth a good-  
 lier boon ! 440  
 But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must  
 Kay,  
 The master of the meats and drinks, be  
 thine.'

He rose and past; then Kay, a man  
 of mien  
 Wan-sallow as the plant that feels  
 itself  
 Root-bitten by white lichen :

'Lo ye now !  
 This fellow hath broken from some  
 abbey, where,  
 God wot, he had not beef and brewis  
 enow,  
 However that might chance ! but an  
 he work,  
 Like any pigeon will I cram his  
 crop,  
 And sleeker shall he shine than any  
 hog.' 450

Then Lancelot standing near : 'Sir  
 Seneschal,  
 Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray,  
 and all the hounds;  
 A horse thou knowest, a man thou  
 dost not know.  
 Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and  
 fine,  
 High nose, a nostril large and fine, and  
 hands  
 Large, fair, and fine ! — Some young  
 lad's mystery —  
 But, or from sheepcot or king's hall,  
 the boy  
 Is noble-natured. Treat him with all  
 grace,  
 Lest he should come to shame thy  
 judging of him.'

Then Kay : 'What murmurest thou  
 of mystery ?<sup>460</sup>  
 Think ye this fellow will poison the  
 King's dish ?  
 Nay, for he spake too fool-like — mys-  
 tery !  
 Tut, an the lad were noble, he had  
 ask'd  
 For horse and armor. Fair and fine,  
 forsooth !  
 Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands ? but see  
 thou to it  
 That thine own fineness, Lancelot,  
 some fine day  
 Undo thee not — and leave my man to  
 me.'

So Gareth all for glory underwent  
 The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage,  
 Ate with young lads his portion by the  
 door,<sup>470</sup>  
 And couch'd at night with grimy  
 kitchen-knaves.  
 And Lancelot ever spake him plea-  
 santly,  
 But Kay the seneschal, who loved him  
 not,  
 Would hustle and harry him, and  
 labor him  
 Beyond his comrade of the hearth,  
 and set  
 To turn the broach, draw water, or  
 hew wood,  
 Or grosser tasks ; and Gareth bow'd  
 himself  
 With all obedience to the King, and  
 wrought  
 All kind of service with a noble ease  
 That graced the lowliest act in doing  
 it.<sup>480</sup>  
 And when the thralls had talk among  
 themselves,  
 And one would praise the love that  
 linkt the King  
 And Lancelot — how the King had  
 saved his life  
 In battle twice, and Lancelot once the  
 King's —  
 For Lancelot was first in the tourna-  
 ment,  
 But Arthur mightiest on the battle-  
 field —  
 Gareth was glad. Or if some other  
 told  
 How once the wandering forester at  
 dawn,

Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,  
 On Caer-Eryri's highest found the  
 King,<sup>490</sup>  
 A naked babe, of whom the Prophet  
 spake,  
 'He passes to the Isle Avilion,  
 He passes and is heal'd and cannot  
 die' —  
 Gareth was glad. But if their talk  
 were foul,  
 Then would he whistle rapid as any  
 lark,  
 Or carol some old roundelay, and so  
 loud  
 That first they mock'd, but, after,  
 revered him.  
 Or Gareth, telling some prodigious  
 tale  
 Of knights who sliced a red life-bub-  
 bling way  
 Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon,  
 held<sup>500</sup>  
 All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good  
 mates  
 Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,  
 Charm'd ; till Sir Kay, the seneschal,  
 would come  
 Blustering upon them, like a sudden  
 wind  
 Among dead leaves, and drive them  
 all apart.  
 Or when the thralls had sport among  
 themselves,  
 So there were any trial of mastery,  
 He, by two yards in casting bar or  
 stone,  
 Was counted best ; and if there chanced  
 a joust,  
 So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to  
 go,<sup>510</sup>  
 Would hurry thither, and when he  
 saw the knights  
 Clash like the coming and retiring  
 wave,  
 And the spear spring, and good horse  
 reel, the boy  
 Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among  
 the thralls ;  
 But in the weeks that follow'd, the  
 good Queen,  
 Repentant of the word she made him  
 swear,  
 And saddening in her childless castle,  
 sent,

Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon,  
Arms for her son, and loosed him  
from his vow. 520

This, Gareth hearing from a squire  
of Lot  
With whom he used to play at tourney once,  
When both were children, and in lonely haunts  
Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,  
And each at either dash from either end—  
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth joy.  
He laugh'd, he sprang. 'Out of the smoke, at once  
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee—  
These news be mine, none other's—nay, the King's—  
Descend into the city;' whereon he sought 530  
The King alone, and found, and told him all.

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in a tilt  
For pastime; yea, he said it; joust can I.  
Make me thy knight—in secret! let my name  
Be hidden, and give me the first quest, I spring  
Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye  
Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush, and bow  
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him:  
'Son, the good mother let me know thee here,  
And sent her wish that I would yield thee thine. 540  
Make thee my knight? my knights are sworn to vows  
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness, And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,  
And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his knees:

'My King, for hardihood I can promise thee.  
For uttermost obedience make demand  
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,  
No mellow master of the meats and drinks!  
And as for love, God wot, I love not yet, 550  
But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King:  
'Make thee my knight in secret? yea, but he,  
Our noblest brother, and our truest man,  
And one with me in all, he needs must know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot know,  
Thy noblest and thy truest!'

And the King:  
'But wherefore would ye men should wonder at you?  
Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,  
And the deed's sake my knighthood do the deed,  
'Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd:  
'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking of it? 561  
Let be my name until I make my name!  
My deeds will speak; it is but for a day.'  
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm  
Smiled the great King, and half-unwillingly  
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.  
Then, after summoning Lancelot privily:  
'I have given him the first quest; he is not proven.  
Look therefore, when he calls for this in hall,  
Thou get to horse and follow him far away. 570  
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see,  
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor slain.'

Then that same day there past into  
the hall  
A damsel of high lineage, and a  
brow  
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-  
blossom,  
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender  
nose  
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower.  
She into hall past with her page and  
cried:

'O King, for thou hast driven the  
foe without,  
See to the foe within! bridge, ford,  
beset <sup>580</sup>  
By bandits, every one that owns a  
tower  
The lord for half a league. Why sit  
ye there?  
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were  
king,  
Till even the lonest hold were all as  
free  
From cursed bloodshed as thine altar-  
cloth  
From that best blood it is a sin to  
spill.'

'Comfort thyself,' said Arthur, 'I  
nor mine  
Rest; so my knighthood keep the  
vows they swore,  
The wastest moorland of our realm  
shall be  
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this  
hall. <sup>590</sup>  
What is thy name? thy need?'

'My name?' she said —  
'Lynette, my name; noble; my need,  
a knight  
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,  
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,  
And comely, yea, and comelier than  
myself.  
She lives in Castle Perilous. A river  
Runs in three loops about her living-  
place;  
And o'er it are three passings, and  
three knights  
Defend the passings, brethren, and a  
fourth,  
And of that four the mightiest, holds  
her stay'd <sup>600</sup>  
In her own castle, and so besieges her

To break her will, and make her wed  
with him;  
And but delays his purport till thou  
send  
To do the battle with him thy chief  
man  
Sir Lancelot, whom he trusts to over-  
throw,  
Then wed, with glory; but she will  
not wed  
Save whom she loveth, or a holy  
life.  
Now therefore have I come for Lan-  
celot.'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth  
ask'd:  
'Damsel, ye know this Order lives to  
crush <sup>610</sup>  
All wrongers of the realm. But say,  
these four,  
Who be they? What the fashion of  
the men?'

'They be of foolish fashion, O Sir  
King,  
The fashion of that old knight-errantry  
Who ride abroad, and do but what  
they will;  
Courteous or bestial from the moment,  
such  
As have nor law nor king; and three  
of these  
Proud in their fantasy call themselves  
the Day,  
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and  
Evening-Star,  
Being strong fools; and never a whit  
more wise <sup>620</sup>  
The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in  
black,  
A huge man-beast of boundless sav-  
agery.  
He names himself the Night and oft-  
ener Death,  
And wears a helmet mounted with a  
skull,  
And bears a skeleton figured on his  
arms,  
To show that who may slay or scape  
the three,  
Slain by himself, shall enter endless  
night.  
And all these four be fools, but mighty  
men,  
And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'



Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where  
 he rose, 630  
 A head with kindling eyes above the  
 throng,  
 'A boon, Sir King—this quest!' 635  
 then — for he mark'd  
 Kay near him groaning like a wounded  
 bull—  
 'Yea, King, thou knowest thy  
 kitchen-knave am I,  
 And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks  
 am I,  
 And I can topple over a hundred such.  
 Thy promise, King,' and Arthur glanc-  
 ing at him,  
 Brought down a momentary brow.  
 'Rough, sudden,  
 And pardonable, worthy to be  
 knight—  
 Go therefore,' and all hearers were  
 amazed. 640

But on the damsel's forehead shame,  
 pride, wrath  
 Slew the may-white. She lifted either  
 arm,  
 'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy  
 chief knight,  
 And thou hast given me but a kitchen-  
 knave.'  
 Then ere a man in hall could stay her,  
 turn'd,  
 Fled down the lane of access to the  
 King,  
 Took horse, descended the slope street,  
 and past  
 The weird white gate, and paused  
 without, beside  
 The field of tourney, murmuring  
 'kitchen-knave!'

Now two great entries open'd from  
 the hall, 650  
 At one end one that gave upon a range  
 Of level pavement where the King  
 would pace  
 At sunrise, gazing over plain and  
 wood;  
 And down from this a lordly stairway  
 sloped  
 Till lost in blowing trees and tops of  
 towers;  
 And out by this main doorway past  
 the King.  
 But one was counter to the hearth, and  
 rose

High that the highest-crested helm  
 could ride  
 Therethro' nor graze; and by this  
 entry fled  
 The damsel in her wrath, and on to  
 this 660  
 Sir Gareth strode, and saw without  
 the door  
 King Arthur's gift, the worth of half  
 a town,  
 A war-horse of the best, and near it  
 stood  
 The two that out of north had follow'd  
 him.  
 This bare a maiden shield, a casque;  
 that held  
 The horse, the spear; whereat Sir  
 Gareth loosed  
 A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to  
 heel,  
 A cloth of roughest web, and cast it  
 down,  
 And from it, like a fuel-smother'd  
 fire  
 That lookt half-dead, brake bright,  
 and flash'd as those 670  
 Dull-coated things, that making slide  
 apart  
 Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath  
 there burns  
 A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and  
 fly.  
 So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in  
 arms.  
 Then as he donn'd the helm, and took  
 the shield  
 And mounted horse and graspt a spear,  
 of grain  
 Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site,  
 and tipt  
 With trenchant steel, around him  
 slowly prest  
 The people, while from out of kitchen  
 came  
 The thralls in throng, and seeing who  
 had work'd 680  
 Lustier than any, and whom they  
 could but love,  
 Mounted in arms, threw up their caps  
 and cried,  
 'God bless the King, and all his  
 fellowship!'  
 And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth  
 rode  
 Down the slope street, and past with-  
 out the gate.

So Gareth past with joy ; but as the  
 cur  
 Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere  
 his cause  
 Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being  
 named,  
 His owner, but remembers all, and  
 growls  
 Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the  
 door 690  
 Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he  
 used  
 To harry and hustle.

‘Bound upon a quest  
 With horse and arms—the King hath  
 past his time—  
 My scullion knave ! Thralls, to your  
 work again,  
 For an your fire be low ye kindle mine !  
 Will there be dawn in West and eve  
 in East ?  
 Begone !—my knave !—belike and  
 like enow  
 Some old head-blow not heeded in his  
 youth  
 So shook his wits they wander in his  
 prime—  
 Crazed ! How the villain lifted up his  
 voice, 700  
 Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-  
 knave !  
 Tut, he was tame and meek enow with  
 me,  
 Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's  
 noticing.  
 Well—I will after my loud knave,  
 and learn  
 Whether he know me for his master  
 yet.  
 Out of the smoke he came, and so my  
 lance  
 Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the  
 mire—  
 Thence, if the King awaken from his  
 craze,  
 Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said :  
 'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against  
 the King, 710  
 For that did never he whereon ye rail,  
 But ever meekly served the King in  
 thee ?  
 Abide ; take counsel, for this lad is  
 great

And lusty, and knowing both of lance  
 and sword.'  
 'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are  
 overfine  
 To mar stout knaves with foolish  
 courtesies ;'  
 Then mounted, on thro' silent faces  
 rode  
 Down the slope city, and out beyond  
 the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering  
 yet  
 Mutter'd the damsel : 'Wherefore did  
 the King 720  
 Scorn me ? for, were Sir Lancelot  
 lackt, at least  
 He might have yielded to me one of  
 those  
 Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,  
 Rather than—O sweet heaven ! O, fie  
 upon him !—  
 His kitchen-knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew—  
 And there were none but few goodlier  
 than he—  
 Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is  
 mine.  
 Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as  
 one  
 That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the  
 holt,  
 And deems it carrion of some wood-  
 land thing, 730  
 Or shrew or weasel, nipt her slender  
 nose  
 With petulant thumb and finger, shrill-  
 ing, 'Hence !  
 Avoid, thou smellest all of kitchen-  
 grease.  
 And look who comes behind ;' for there  
 was Kay.  
 'Knowest thou not me ? thy master ?  
 I am Kay.  
 We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,  
 'Master no more ! too well I know  
 thee, ay—  
 The most ungente knight in Arthur's  
 hall.'  
 'Have at thee then,' said Kay ; they  
 shock'd, and Kay  
 Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried  
 again, 740

'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away  
she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to  
fly  
Behind her, and the heart of her good  
horse  
Was nigh to burst with violence of the  
beat,  
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken  
spoke:

'What doest thou, scullion, in my  
fellowship?  
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught  
the more  
Or love thee better, that by some de-  
vice  
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappi-  
ness,  
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy  
master — thou! —  
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!  
— to me  
Thou smell'st all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd  
gently, 'say  
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye  
say,  
I leave not till I finish this fair  
quest,  
Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it?  
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he  
talks!  
The listening rogue hath caught the  
manner of it.  
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met  
with, knave,  
And then by such a one that thou for  
all  
The kitchen brewis that was ever  
supt  
Shalt not once dare to look him in the  
face.'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a  
smile  
That madden'd her, and away she  
flash'd again  
Down the long avenues of a bound-  
less wood;  
And Gareth following was again be-  
knaved:

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd  
the only way  
Where Arthur's men are set along the  
wood;  
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as  
leaves.  
If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but  
yet,  
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit  
of thine?  
Fight, an thou canst; I have miss'd  
the only way.'

So till the dusk that follow'd even-  
song  
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;  
Then after one long slope was  
mounted, saw,  
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thou-  
sand pines  
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink  
To westward — in the deeps whereof  
a mere,  
Round as the red eye of an eagle-owl,  
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and  
shouts  
Ascended, and there brake a serving-  
man  
Flying from out of the black wood,  
and crying,  
'They have bound my lord to cast him  
in the mere.'  
Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right  
the wrong'd,  
But straitlier bound am I to bide with  
thee.'  
And when the damsels spake contemp-  
tuously,  
'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried  
again,  
'Follow, I lead!' so down among the  
pines  
He plunged; and there, black-shad-  
ow'd nigh the mere,  
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and  
reed,  
Saw six tall men haling a seventh  
along,  
A stone about his neck to drown him  
in it.  
Three with good blows he quieted,  
but three  
Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed  
the stone  
From off his neck, then in the mere  
beside

Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.  
 Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet  
 Set him, a stalwart baron, Arthur's friend.

'Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues  
 Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause is theirs 800  
 To hate me, for my wont hath ever been  
 To catch my thief, and then like vermin here  
 Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;  
 And under this wan water many of them  
 Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,  
 And rise, and flickering in a grimly light  
 Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life  
 Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.  
 And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.  
 What guerdon will ye?'

Gareth sharply spake:  
 'None! for the deed's sake have I done the deed, 811  
 In uttermost obedience to the King.  
 But wilt thou yield this damsel harborage?'

Whereat the baron saying, 'I well believe  
 You be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh  
 Broke from Lynette: 'Ay, truly of a truth,  
 And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave! —  
 But deem not I accept thee aught the more,  
 Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit  
 Down on a rout of craven foresters.  
 A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them. 821  
 Nay — for thou smell'st of the kitchen still.

But an this lord will yield us harbor-age,  
 Well.'

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,  
 All in a full-fair manor and a rich,  
 His towers, where that day a feast had been  
 Held in high hall, and many a viand left,  
 And many a costly cate, received the three.  
 And there they placed a peacock in his pride 825  
 Before the damsel, and the baron set  
 Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

'Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,  
 Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.  
 Hear me — this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,  
 And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot  
 To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night —

The last a monster unsubduable  
 Of any save of him for whom I call'd —  
 Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,

"The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I, 840  
 And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I."

Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,

"Go therefore," and so gives the quest to him —

Him — here — a villain fitter to stick swine

Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,

Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.'

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord

Now look'd at one and now at other, left

The damsel by the peacock in his pride,

And, seating Gareth at another board,  
 Sat down beside him, ate and then began: 851

'Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,  
Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,  
And whether she be mad, or else the King,  
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,  
I ask not; but thou strikest a strong stroke,  
For strong thou art and goodly there-withal,  
And savor of my life; and therefore now,  
For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh  
Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back 860  
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.  
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,  
The savor of my life.'

And Gareth said,  
'Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,  
Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell.'

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he saved  
Had, some brief space, convey'd them on their way  
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth spake,  
'Lead, and I follow.' Haughtily she replied:

'I fly no more; I allow thee for an hour. 870  
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,  
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, methinks  
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt thou, fool?  
For hard by here is one will overthrow  
And slay thee; then will I to court again,  
And shame the King for only yielding me  
My champion from the ashes of his hearth.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously:

'Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.  
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find 880  
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay  
Among the ashes and wedded the King's son.'

Then to the shore of one of those long loops  
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they came.  
Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep; the stream  
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc  
Took at a leap; and on the further side  
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold  
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,  
Save that the dome was purple, and above, 890  
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.  
And therebefore the lawless warrior paced  
Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this he,  
The champion thou hast brought from Arthur's hall,  
For whom we let thee pass?' 'Nay, nay,' she said,  
'Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter scorn  
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee here  
His kitchen-knave; and look thou to thyself.  
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,  
And slay thee unarm'd; he is not knight but knave.' 900

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the Dawn,  
And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,  
Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-folds  
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair girls  
In gilt and rosy raiment came. Their feet  
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair  
All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem

Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.  
 These arm'd him in blue arms, and  
     gave a shield  
 Blue also, and thereon the morning  
     star.<sup>910</sup>  
 And Gareth silent gazed upon the  
     knight,  
 Who stood a moment, ere his horse  
     was brought,  
 Glorifying; and in the stream beneath  
     him shone,  
 Immingled with heaven's azure waver-  
     ingly,  
 The gay pavilion and the naked feet,  
 His arms, the rosy raiment, and the  
     star.

Then she that watch'd him: 'Where-  
     fore stare ye so?  
 Thou shakest in thy fear. There yet  
     is time;  
 Flee down the valley before he get to  
     horse.  
 Who will cry shame? Thou art not  
     knight but knave.'<sup>920</sup>

Said Gareth: 'Damsel, whether  
     knave or knight,  
 Far liefer had I fight a score of times  
 Than hear thee so missay me and  
     revile.  
 Fair words were best for him who  
     fights for thee:  
 But truly foul are better, for they  
     send  
 That strength of anger thro' mine  
     arms, I know  
 That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore  
 The star, when mounted, cried from  
     o'er the bridge:  
 'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of  
     me!  
 Such fight not I, but answer scorn with  
     scorn.'<sup>930</sup>  
 For this were shame to do him further  
     wrong  
 Than set him on his feet, and take his  
     horse  
 And arms, and so return him to the  
     King.  
 Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,  
     knave.  
 Avoid; for it beseemeth not a knave  
 To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest!  
 I spring from loftier lineage than thine  
     own.'  
 He spake; and all at fiery speed the  
     two  
 Shock'd on the central bridge, and  
     either spear  
 Bent but not brake, and either knight  
     at once,<sup>940</sup>  
 Hurl'd as a stone from out of a cata-  
     pult  
 Beyond his horse's crupper and the  
     bridge,  
 Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and  
     drew,  
 And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his  
     brand  
 He drave his enemy backward down  
     the bridge,  
 The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken,  
     kitchen-knave!'  
 Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but  
     one stroke  
 Laid him that clove it grovelling on  
     the ground.

Then cried the fallen, 'Take not my  
     life; I yield.'  
 And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of  
     me'<sup>950</sup>  
 Good—I accord it easily as a grace.'  
 She reddening, 'Insolent scullion! I  
     of thee?  
 I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!  
 'Then shall he die.' And Gareth there  
     unlaced  
 His helmet as to slay him, but she  
     shriek'd,  
 'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay  
 One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel,  
     thy charge  
 Is an abounding pleasure to me.  
     Knight,  
 Thy life is thine at her command.  
     Arise  
 And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and  
     say'<sup>960</sup>  
 His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See  
     thou crave  
 His pardon for thy breaking of his  
     laws.  
 Myself when I return will plead for  
     thee.  
 Thy shield is mine—farewell; and,  
     damsel, thou,  
 Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled ;  
Then when he came upon her, spake :  
‘Methought,

Knave, when I watch’d thee striking  
on the bridge,

The savor of thy kitchen came upon  
me

A little faintlier ; but the wind hath  
changed,

I scent it twenty-fold.’ And then she  
sang, <sup>970</sup>

“‘O morning star”—not that tall  
felon there

Whom thou, by sorcery or unhappi-  
ness

Or some device, hast foully over-  
thrown, —

“‘O morning star that smilest in the blue,  
Ostar, my morning dream hath proven true,  
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled  
on me.”

‘But thou begone, take counsel, and  
away,  
For hard by here is one that guards a  
ford—

The second brother in their fool’s para-  
ble—

Will pay thee all thy wages, and to  
boot. <sup>980</sup>

Care not for shame ; thou art not  
knight but knave.’

To whom Sir Gareth answer’d,  
laughingly:

‘Parables? Hear a parable of the  
knave.

When I was kitchen-knave among the  
rest,

Fierce was the hearth, and one of my  
co-mates

Own’d a rough dog, to whom he cast  
his coat,

“Guard it,” and there was none to  
meddle with it.

And such a coat art thou, and thee  
the King

Gave me to guard, and such a dog  
am I,

To worry, and not to flee—and—  
knight or knave — <sup>990</sup>

The knave that doth thee service as  
full knight

Is all as good, meseems, as any knight  
Toward thy sister’s freeing.’

‘Ay, Sir Knave !  
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a  
knight,  
Being but knave, I hate thee all the  
more.’

‘Fair damsel, you should worship  
me the more,  
That, being but knave, I throw thine  
enemies.’

‘Ay, ay,’ she said, ‘but thou shalt  
meet thy match.’

So when they touch’d the second  
river-loop,  
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in  
mail <sup>1000</sup>

Burnish’d to blinding, shone the Noon-  
day Sun

Beyond a raging shallow. As if the  
flower

That blows a globe of after arrow-  
lets

Ten-thousand-fold had grown, flash’d  
the fierce shield,

All sun ; and Gareth’s eyes had flying  
blots

Before them when he turn’d from  
watching him.

He from beyond the roaring shallow  
roar’d,

‘What doest thou, brother, in my  
marches here?’

And she athwart the shallow shrill’d  
again,

‘Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur’s  
hall <sup>1010</sup>

Hath overthrown thy brother, and  
hath his arms.’

‘Ugh !’ cried the Sun, and, vizoring  
up a red

And cipher face of rounded foolish-  
ness,

Push’d horse across the foamings of  
the ford,

Whom Gareth met mid-stream ; no  
room was there

For lance or tourney-skill. Four  
strokes they struck

With sword, and these were mighty ;  
the new knight

Had fear he might be shamed ; but as  
the Sun

Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike  
the fifth,

The hoof of his horse slipt in the  
stream, the stream <sup>1020</sup>  
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd  
away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart  
the ford ;  
So drew him home ; but he that fought  
no more,  
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,  
Yielded, and Gareth sent him to the  
King.  
' Myself when I return will plead for  
thee.  
Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.  
' Hath not the good wind, damsel,  
changed again ?'  
' Nay, not a point ; nor art thou victor  
here.  
There lies a ridge of slate across the  
ford ; <sup>1030</sup>  
His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for  
I saw it.

" ' O sun " — not this strong fool  
whom thou, Sir Knave,  
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappi-  
ness —

" ' O sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,  
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,  
Shine sweetly ; twice my love hath smiled  
on me." "

' What knowest thou of love-song  
or of love ?  
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly  
born,  
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea,  
perchance, —

" ' O dewy flowers that open to the sun,  
O dewy flowers that close when day is  
done, <sup>1041</sup>  
Blow sweetly ; twice my love hath smiled  
on me." "

' What knowest thou of flowers, ex-  
cept, belike,  
To garnish meats with ? hath not our  
good King  
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitch-  
endome,  
A foolish love for flowers ? what stick  
ye round  
The pasty ? wherewithal deck the  
boar's head ?  
Flowers ? nay, the boar hath rosema-  
ries and bay.

' " O birds that warble to the morning  
sky,  
O birds that warble as the day goes by,  
Sing sweetly ; twice my love hath smiled  
on me." <sup>1051</sup>

' What knowest thou of birds, lark,  
mavis, merle,  
Linnet ? what dream ye when they  
utter forth  
May-music growing with the growing  
light,  
Their sweet sun-worship ? these be  
for the snare —  
So runs thy fancy — these be for the  
spit,  
Larding and basting. See thou have  
not now  
Larded thy last, except thou turn and  
fly.  
There stands the third fool of their  
allegory.'

For there beyond a bridge of treble  
bow, <sup>1060</sup>  
All in a rose-red from the west, and all  
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the  
broad  
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the  
knight  
That named himself the Star of Even-  
ing stood.

And Gareth, ' Wherefore waits the  
madman there  
Naked in open dayshine ? ' ' Nay, ' she  
cried,  
' Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd  
skins  
That fit him like his own ; and so ye  
cleave  
His armor off him, these will turn the  
blade.'

Then the third brother shouted o'er  
the bridge, <sup>1070</sup>  
' O brother-star, why shine ye here so  
low ?  
Thy ward is higher up ; but have ye  
slain  
The damsel's champion ? ' and the  
damsel cried :

' No star of thine, but shot from  
Arthur's heaven  
With all disaster unto thine and  
thee !



For both thy younger brethren have  
gone down  
Before this youth; and so wilt thou,  
Sir Star.  
Art thou not old ?

‘ Old, damsel, old and hard,  
Old, with the might and breath of  
twenty boys.’  
Said Gareth, ‘ Old, and over-bold in  
brag ! 1080  
But that same strength which threw  
the Morning Star  
Can throw the Evening.’

Then that other blew  
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.  
‘ Approach and arm me ! ’ With slow  
steps from out  
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-  
stain’d  
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,  
And arm’d him in old arms, and  
brought a helm  
With but a drying evergreen for crest,  
And gave a shield whereon the star of  
even  
Half-tarnish’d and half-bright, his em-  
blem, shone. 1090  
But when it glitter’d o’er the saddle-  
bow,  
They madly hurl’d together on the  
bridge ;  
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted,  
drew,  
There met him drawn, and overthrew  
him again,  
But up like fire he started ; and as oft  
As Gareth brought him grovelling on  
his knees,  
So many a time he vaulted up again ;  
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great  
heart,  
Foredooming all his trouble was in  
vain,  
Labor’d within him, for he seem’d as  
one 1100  
That all in later, sadder age begins  
To war against ill uses of a life,  
But these from all his life arise, and  
cry,  
‘ Thou hast made us lords, and canst  
not put us down ! ’  
He half despairs ; so Gareth seem’d to  
strike

Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the  
while,  
‘ Well done, knave-knight, well  
stricken, O good knight-  
knave —  
O knave, as noble as any of all the  
knights —  
Shame me not, shame me not. I have  
prophesied —  
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table  
Round — 1110  
His arms are old, he trusts the hard-  
en’d skin —  
Strike — strike — the wind will never  
change again.’  
And Gareth hearing ever stronger  
smote,  
And hew’d great pieces of his armor  
off him,  
But lash’d in vain against the hard-  
en’d skin,  
And could not wholly bring him  
under, more  
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling  
ridge on ridge,  
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips  
and springs  
For ever ; till at length Sir Gareth’s  
brand  
Clash’d his, and brake it utterly to the  
hilt. 1120  
‘ I have thee now ; ’ but forth that  
other sprang,  
And, all unknighthlike, writhed his wiry  
arms  
Around him, till he felt, despite his  
mail,  
Strangled, but straining even his utter-  
most  
Cast, and so hurl’d him headlong o’er  
the bridge  
Down to the river, sink or swim, and  
cried,  
‘ Lead, and I follow.’

But the damsel said :  
‘ I lead no longer ; ride thou at my  
side ;  
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-  
knaves.

“ O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,  
O rainbow with three colors after rain, 1131  
Shine sweetly ; thrice my love hath smiled  
on me.”

'Sir, — and, good faith, I fain had added — Knight,  
But that I heard thee call thyself a knave, —  
Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,  
Missaid thee. Noble I am, and thought the King  
Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,  
For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,  
And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal  
As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,  
Hast maz'd my wit. I marvel what thou art.'

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to blame,  
Saving that you mistrusted our good King  
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one  
Not fit to cope your quest. You said your say;  
Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold  
He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet  
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets  
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat  
At any gentle damsel's waywardness. Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought for me;  
And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks  
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,  
Hath force to quell me.'

Nigh upon that hour  
When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,  
Lets down his other leg, and stretching dreams  
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,  
Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,  
And told him of a cavern hard at hand,  
Where bread and baken meats and good red wine

Of Southland, which the Lady Lynors  
Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein  
Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse  
Sculptured, and deckt in slowly waning hues.  
'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here,  
Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock  
The war of Time against the soul of man.  
And you four fools have suck'd their allegory  
From these damp walls, and taken but the form.  
Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt and read —  
In letters like to those the vexillary  
Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming Gelt —  
'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES,' —  
'HESPERUS' —  
'Nox' — 'Mors,' beneath five figures, armed men,  
Slab after slab, their faces forward all,  
And running down the Soul, a shape that fled  
With broken wings, torn raiment, and loose hair,  
For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.  
'Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,  
Who comes behind?'

For one — delay'd at first  
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay  
To Camelot, then by what thereafter chanced,  
The damsel's headlong error thro' the wood —  
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-loops —  
His blue shield-lions cover'd — softly drew  
Behind the twain, and when he saw the star  
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him cried,

'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my friend.'

And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry ; <sup>1190</sup>

But when they closed — in a moment — at one touch

Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the world —

Went sliding down so easily, and fell. That when he found the grass within his hands

He laugh'd. The laughter jarr'd upon Lynette.

Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and overthrown,

And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,

Why laugh ye ? that ye blew your boast in vain ?'

'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son Of old King Lot and good Queen Belli-

cent, <sup>1200</sup>

And victor of the bridges and the ford, And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by whom

I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness —

Device and sorcery and unhappiness — Out, sword ; we are thrown !' And

Lancelot answer'd : 'Prince, O Gareth — thro' the mere unhappiness

Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,

Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole

As on the day when Arthur knighted him.'

Then Gareth : 'Thou — Lancelot ! — thine the hand <sup>1210</sup>

That threw me ? An some chance to mar the boast

Thy brethren of thee make — which could not chance —

Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,

Shamed had I been, and sad — O Lancelot — thou !'

Whereat the maiden, petulant : 'Lancelot,

Why came ye not, when call'd ? and wherefore now

Come ye, not call'd ? I gloried in my knave,

Who being still rebuked would answer still

Courteous as any knight — but now, if knight,

The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and trick'd, <sup>1220</sup>

And only wondering wherefore play'd upon ;

And doubtful whether I and mine be scorn'd.

Where should be truth if not in Arthur's hall.

In Arthur's presence ? Knight, knave, prince and fool,

I hate thee and forever.'

And Lancelot said :

'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth ! knight art thou

To the King's best wish. O damsel, be you wise,

To call him shamed who is but overthrown ?

Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a time.

Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last, <sup>1230</sup>

And overthrower from being overthrown.

With sword we have not striven, and thy good horse

And thou are weary ; yet not less I felt Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance

of thine.

Well hast thou done ; for all the stream is freed,

And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his foes,

And when reviled hast answer'd graciously,

And makest merry when overthrown. Prince, knight,

Hail, knight and prince, and of our Table Round !'

And then when turning to Lynette he told <sup>1240</sup>

The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said : 'Ay, well — ay, well — for worse than

being fool'd

Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave, Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats

and drinks

And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.

But all about it flies a honeysuckle.

Seek, till we find.' And when they  
 sought and found,  
 Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his  
 life  
 Past into sleep; on whom the maiden  
 gazed:  
 'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to  
 sleep hast thou. <sup>1250</sup>  
 Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to  
 him  
 As any mother? Ay, but such a one  
 As all day long hath rated at her child,  
 And vext his day, but blesses him  
 asleep —  
 Good lord, how sweetly smells the  
 honeysuckle  
 In the hush'd night, as if the world  
 were one  
 Of utter peace, and love, and gentle-  
 ness!  
 O Lancelot, Lancelot,' — and she clapt  
 her hands —  
 'Full merry am I to find my goodly  
 knave  
 Is knight and noble. See now, sworn  
 have I, <sup>1260</sup>  
 Else yon black felon had not let me  
 pass,  
 To bring thee back to do the battle  
 with him.  
 Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee  
 first;  
 Who doubts thee victor? so will my  
 knight-knave  
 Miss the full flower of this accomplish-  
 ment.'

Said Lancelot: 'Peradventure he  
 you name  
 May know my shield. Let Gareth, an  
 he will,  
 Change his for mine, and take my  
 charger, fresh,  
 Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle  
 as well  
 As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-like,'  
 she said, <sup>1270</sup>  
 'Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as  
 in all.'

And Gareth, waking, fiercely  
 clutch'd the shield:  
 'Ramp, ye lance-splintering lions, on  
 whom all spears  
 Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to  
 roar!

Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your  
 lord! —  
 Care not, good beasts, so well I care  
 for you.  
 O noble Lancelot, from my hold on  
 these  
 Streams virtue — fire — thro' one that  
 will not shame  
 Even the shadow of Lancelot under  
 shield.  
 Hence; let us go.'

Silent the silent field  
 They traversed. Arthur's Harp tho'  
 summer-wan, <sup>1281</sup>  
 In counter motion to the clouds, al-  
 lured  
 The glance of Gareth dreaming on his  
 liege.  
 A star shot: 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the  
 foe falls!'  
 An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor  
 pealing there!'  
 Suddenly she that rode upon his left  
 Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent  
 him, crying:  
 'Yield, yield him this again; 'tis he  
 must fight:  
 I curse the tongue that all thro' yes-  
 terday  
 Reviled thee, and hath wrought on  
 Lancelot now <sup>1290</sup>  
 To lend thee horse and shield. Won-  
 ders ye have done,  
 Miracles ye cannot. Here is glory  
 enow  
 In having flung the three. I see thee  
 maim'd,  
 Mangled; I swear thou canst not fling  
 the fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me  
 all ye know.  
 You cannot scare me; nor rough face,  
 or voice,  
 Brute bulk of limb, or boundless sav-  
 agery  
 Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, prince,' she cried,  
 'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,  
 Seeing he never rides abroad by day,  
 But watch'd him have I like a phan-  
 tom pass <sup>1301</sup>  
 Chilling the night; nor have I heard  
 the voice.'

Always he made his mouthpiece of a  
 page  
 Who came and went, and still reported  
 him  
 As closing in himself the strength of  
 ten,  
 And when his anger tare him, mas-  
 sacring  
 Man, woman, lad, and girl — yea, the  
 soft babe!  
 Some hold that he hath swallow'd in-  
 fant flesh,  
 Monster! O prince, I went for Lance-  
 lot first,  
 The quest is Lancelot's; give him  
 back the shield.' 1310

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight  
 for this,  
 Belike he wins it as the better man;  
 Thus — and not else!'

But Lancelot on him urged  
 All the devisings of their chivalry  
 When one might meet a mightier than  
 himself;  
 How best to manage horse, lance,  
 sword, and shield,  
 And so fill up the gap where force  
 might fail  
 With skill and fineness. Instant were  
 his words.

Then Gareth: 'Here be rules. I  
 know but one —  
 To dash against mine enemy and to  
 win. 1320  
 Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the  
 joust,  
 And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help  
 thee!' sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud  
 that grew  
 To thunder-gloom palling all stars,  
 they rode  
 In converse till she made her palfrey  
 halt,  
 Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd,  
 'There.'  
 And all the three were silent seeing,  
 pitch'd  
 Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,  
 A huge pavilion like a mountain peak  
 Sunder the glooming crimson on the  
 marge, 1330

Black, with black banner, and a long  
 black horn  
 Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth  
 graspt,  
 And so, before the two could hinder  
 him,  
 Sent all his heart and breath thro' all  
 the horn.  
 Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled;  
 anon  
 Came lights and lights, and once  
 again he blew;  
 Whereon were hollow tramlings up  
 and down  
 And muffled voices heard, and shad-  
 ows past;  
 Till high above him, circled with her  
 maids,  
 The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,  
 Beautiful among lights, and waving  
 to him 1341  
 White hands and courtesy. But when  
 the prince  
 Three times had blown — after long  
 hush — at last —  
 The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,  
 Thro' those black foldings, that which  
 housed therein.  
 High on a night-black horse, in night-  
 black arms,  
 With white breast-bone, and barren  
 ribs of Death,  
 And crown'd with fleshless laughter  
 — some ten steps —  
 In the half-light — thro' the dim dawn  
 — advanced  
 The monster, and then paused, and  
 spake no word. 1350

But Gareth spake and all indig-  
 nantly:  
 'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the  
 strength of ten,  
 Canst thou not trust the limbs thy  
 God hath given,  
 But must, to make the terror of thee  
 more,  
 Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries  
 Of that which Life hath done with,  
 and the clod,  
 Less dull than thou, will hide with  
 mantling flowers  
 As if for pity?' But he spake no  
 word;  
 Which set the horror higher. A  
 maiden swoon'd;

The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands  
and wept,<sup>1360</sup>  
As doom'd to be the bride of Night  
and Death;  
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his  
helm;  
And even Sir Lancelot thro' his warm  
blood felt  
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him  
were agast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger  
fiercely neigh'd,  
And Death's dark war-horse bounded  
forward with him.  
Then those that did not blink the ter-  
ror saw  
That Death was cast to ground, and  
slowly rose.  
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split  
the skull.  
Half fell to right and half to left and  
lay.<sup>1370</sup>  
Then with a stronger buffet he clove  
the helm  
As throughly as the skull; and out  
from this  
Issued the bright face of a blooming  
boy  
Fresh as a flower new-born, and cry-  
ing, 'Knight,  
Slay me not; my three brethren bade  
me do it,  
To make a horror all about the house,  
And stay the world from Lady Lyo-  
nors.  
They never dream'd the passes would  
be past.'  
Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one  
Not many a moon his younger, 'My  
fair child,<sup>1380</sup>  
What madness made thee challenge  
the chief knight  
Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they  
bade me do it.  
They hate the King and Lancelot, the  
King's friend;  
They hoped to slay him somewhere on  
the stream,  
They never dream'd the passes could  
be past.'

Then sprang the happier day from  
underground;  
And Lady Lyonors and her house,  
with dance

And revel and song, made merry over  
Death,  
As being after all their foolish fears  
And horrors only proven a blooming  
boy.<sup>1390</sup>  
So large mirth lived, and Gareth won  
the quest.

And he that told the tale in older  
times  
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,  
But he that told it later says Lynette.

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

THE brave Geraint, a knight of  
Arthur's court,  
A tributary prince of Devon, one  
Of that great Order of the Table  
Round,  
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,  
And loved her as he loved the light of  
heaven.  
And as the light of heaven varies, now  
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by  
night  
With moon and trembling stars, so  
loved Geraint  
To make her beauty vary day by day,  
In crimsons and in purples and in  
gems.<sup>10</sup>  
And Enid, but to please her husband's  
eye,  
Who first had found and loved her in  
a state  
Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him  
In some fresh splendor; and the Queen  
herself,  
Grateful to Prince Geraint for service  
done,  
Loved her, and often with her own  
white hands  
Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveli-  
est,  
Next after her own self, in all the  
court.  
And Enid loved the Queen, and with  
true heart  
Adored her, as the stateliest and the  
best.<sup>20</sup>  
And loveliest of all women upon earth.  
And seeing them so tender and so  
close,  
Long in their common love rejoiced  
Geraint.

But when a rumor rose about the  
 Queen,  
 Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,  
 Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet  
 was heard  
 The world's loud whisper breaking  
 into storm,  
 Not less Geraint believed it; and there  
 fell  
 A horror on him lest his gentle wife,  
 Thro' that great tenderness for Guine-  
 vere,  
 Had suffer'd or should suffer any taint <sup>30</sup>  
 In nature. Wherefore, going to the  
 King,  
 He made this pretext, that his prince-  
 dom lay  
 Close on the borders of a territory  
 Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff  
 knights,  
 Assassins, and all flyers from the  
 hand  
 Of Justice, and whatever loathes a  
 law;  
 And therefore, till the King himself  
 should please  
 To cleanse this common sewer of all  
 his realm,  
 He craved a fair permission to depart,  
 And there defend his marches. And  
 the King <sup>41</sup>  
 Mused for a little on his plea, but,  
 last,  
 Allowing it, the prince and Enid rode,  
 And fifty knights rode with them, to  
 the shores  
 Of Severn, and they past to their own  
 land;  
 Where, thinking that, if ever yet was  
 wife  
 True to her lord, mine shall be so to  
 me,  
 He compass'd her with sweet obser-  
 vances  
 And worship, never leaving her, and  
 grew <sup>49</sup>  
 Forgetful of his promise to the King,  
 Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
 Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,  
 Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
 Forgetful of his principedom and its  
 cares.  
 And this forgetfulness was hateful to  
 her.  
 And by and by the people, when they  
 met

In twos and threes, or fuller compa-  
 nies,  
 Began to scoff and jeer and babble of  
 him  
 As of a prince whose manhood was  
 all gone,  
 And molten down in mere uxorious-  
 ness. <sup>60</sup>  
 And this she gather'd from the peo-  
 ple's eyes;  
 This too the women who attired her  
 head,  
 To please her, dwelling on his bound-  
 less love,  
 Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the  
 more;  
 And day by day she thought to tell  
 Geraint,  
 But could not out of bashful delicacy,  
 While he, that watch'd her sadden,  
 was the more  
 Suspicious that her nature had a  
 taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer  
 morn—  
 They sleeping each by either—the  
 new sun <sup>70</sup>  
 Beat thro' the blindless casement of  
 the room,  
 And heated the strong warrior in his  
 dreams;  
 Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,  
 And bared the knotted column of his  
 throat,  
 The massive square of his heroic  
 breast,  
 And arms on which the standing  
 muscle sloped,  
 As slopes a wild brook o'er a little  
 stone,  
 Running too vehemently to break  
 upon it.  
 And Enid woke and sat beside the  
 couch,  
 Admiring him, and thought within  
 herself, <sup>84</sup>  
 Was ever man so grandly made as  
 he?  
 Then, like a shadow, past the people's  
 talk  
 And accusation of uxoriousness  
 Across her mind, and, bowing over  
 him,  
 Low to her own heart piteously she  
 said:

'O noble breast and all-puissant  
 arms,  
 Am I the cause, I the poor cause that  
 men  
 Reproach you, saying all your force  
 is gone?  
 I *am* the cause, because I dare not  
 speak  
 And tell him what I think and what  
 they say.  
 And yet I hate that he should linger  
 here;  
 I cannot love my lord and not his  
 name.  
 Far liefer had I gird his harness on  
 him,  
 And ride with him to battle and stand  
 by,  
 And watch his mightful hand striking  
 great blows  
 At caitiffs and at wrongers of the  
 world.  
 Far better were I laid in the dark  
 earth,  
 Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
 Not to be folded more in these dear  
 arms,  
 And darken'd from the high light in  
 his eyes,  
 Than that my lord thro' me should  
 suffer shame.  
 Am I so bold, and could I so stand  
 by,  
 And see my dear lord wounded in the  
 strife,  
 Or maybe pierced to death before  
 mine eyes,  
 And yet not dare to tell him what I  
 think,  
 And how men slur him, saying all his  
 force  
 Is melted into mere effeminacy?  
 O me, I fear that I am no true wife!  
 Half inwardly, half audibly she  
 spoke,  
 And the strong passion in her made  
 her weep  
 True tears upon his broad and naked  
 breast,  
 And these awoke him, and by great  
 mischance  
 He heard but fragments of her later  
 words,  
 And that she fear'd she was not a  
 true wife.

And then he thought, 'In spite of all  
 my care,  
 For all my pains, poor man, for all  
 my pains,  
 She is not faithful to me, and I see  
 her  
 Weeping for some gay knight in  
 Arthur's hall.'  
 Then, tho' he loved and revered  
 her too much  
 To dream she could be guilty of foul  
 act,  
 Right thro' his manful breast darted  
 the pang  
 That makes a man, in the sweet face  
 of her  
 Whom he loves most, lonely and mis-  
 erable.  
 At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out  
 of bed,  
 And shook his drowsy squire awake  
 and cried,  
 'My charger and her palfrey;' then  
 to her,  
 'I will ride forth into the wilderness,  
 For, tho' it seems my spurs are yet to  
 win,  
 I have not fallen so low as some would  
 wish.  
 And thou, put on thy worst and  
 meanest dress  
 And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd,  
 amazed,  
 'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her  
 fault.'  
 But he, 'I charge thee, ask not but  
 obey.'  
 Then she bethought her of a faded  
 silk,  
 A faded mantle and a faded veil,  
 And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,  
 Wherein she kept them folded rever-  
 ently  
 With sprigs of summer laid between  
 the folds,  
 She took them, and array'd herself  
 therein,  
 Remembering when first he came on  
 her  
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved  
 her in it,  
 And all her foolish fears about the  
 dress,  
 And all his journey to her, as himself  
 Had told her, and their coming to the  
 court.



For Arthur on the Whitsuntide be-  
fore  
Held court at old Caerleon upon  
Usk.  
There on a day, he sitting high in  
hall,  
Before him came a forester of Dean,  
Wet from the woods, with notice of a  
hart  
Faller than all his fellows, milky-  
white,  
First seen that day; these things he<sup>150</sup>  
told the King.  
Then the good King gave order to let  
blow  
His horns for hunting on the morrow  
morn,  
And when the Queen petition'd for  
his leave  
To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.  
So with the morning all the court  
were gone.  
But Guinevere lay late into the  
morn,  
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming  
of her love  
For Lancelot, and forgetful of the  
hunt,  
But rose at last, a single maiden with  
her,<sup>160</sup>  
Took horse, and forded Usk, and  
gain'd the wood;  
There, on a little knoll beside it,  
stay'd  
Waiting to hear the hounds, but heard  
instead  
A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince  
Geraint,  
Late also, wearing neither hunting-  
dress  
Nor weapon save a golden-hilted  
brand,  
Came quickly flashing thro' the shal-  
low ford  
Behind them, and so gallop'd up the  
knoll.  
A purple scarf, at either end whereof  
There swung an apple of the purest  
gold,<sup>170</sup>  
Sway'd round about him, as he gal-  
lop'd up  
To join them, glancing like a dragon-  
fly  
In summer suit and silks of holiday.  
Low bow'd the tributary prince, and  
she,

Sweetly and stately, and with all  
grace  
Of womanhood and queenhood, an-  
swer'd him:  
'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said,  
'later than we!'  
'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd,  
'and so late  
That I but come like you to see the  
hunt.  
Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with  
me,' she said;<sup>180</sup>  
'For on this little knoll, if anywhere,  
There is good chance that we shall  
hear the hounds:  
Here often they break covert at our  
feet.'

And while they listen'd for the dis-  
tant hunt,  
And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,  
King Arthur's hound of deepest  
mouth, there rode  
Full slowly by a knight, lady, and  
dwarf;  
Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and  
the knight  
Had vizzor up, and show'd a youthful  
face,  
Imperious, and of haughtiest linea-  
ments.<sup>190</sup>  
And Guinevere, not mindful of his  
face  
In the King's hall, desired his name,  
and sent  
Her maiden to demand it of the  
dwarf,  
Who being vicious, old, and irritable,  
And doubling all his master's vice of  
pride,  
Made answer sharply that she should  
not know.  
'Then will I ask it of himself,' she  
said.  
'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,'  
cried the dwarf;  
'Thou art not worthy even to speak  
of him;'  
And when she put her horse toward  
the knight,<sup>200</sup>  
Struck at her with his whip, and she  
return'd  
Indignant to the Queen; whereat  
Geraint  
Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn the  
name,'

Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd  
 it of him,  
 Who answer'd as before; and when  
 the prince  
 Had put his horse in motion toward  
 the knight,  
 Struck at him with his whip, and cut  
 his cheek.  
 The prince's blood spirted upon the  
 scarf,  
 Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive  
 hand  
 Caught at the hilt, as to abolish  
 him: 210  
 But he, from his exceeding manfulness  
 And pure nobility of temperament,  
 Wroth to be wroth at such a worm,  
 refrain'd  
 From even a word, and so returning  
 said:

'I will avenge this insult, noble  
 Queen,  
 Done in your maiden's person to your-  
 self,  
 And I will track this vermin to their  
 earths;  
 For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not  
 doubt  
 To find, at some place I shall come at,  
 arms  
 On loan, or else for pledge; and, being  
 found, 220  
 Then will I fight him, and will break  
 his pride,  
 And on the third day will again be  
 here,  
 So that I be not fallen in fight. Fare-  
 well.'

'Farewell, fair prince,' answer'd  
 the stately Queen.  
 'Be prosperous in this journey, as in  
 all;  
 And may you light on all things that  
 you love,  
 And live to wed with her whom first  
 you love.  
 But ere you wed with any, bring your  
 bride,  
 And I were she the daughter of a  
 king,  
 Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the  
 hedge, 230  
 Will clothe her for her bridals like  
 the sun.'

And Prince Geraint, now thinking  
 that he heard  
 The noble hart at bay, now the far  
 horn,  
 A little vext at losing of the hunt,  
 A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
 By ups and downs, thro' many a  
 grassy glade  
 And valley, with fixt eye following  
 the three.  
 At last they issued from the world of  
 wood,  
 And climb'd upon a fair and even  
 ridge,  
 And show'd themselves against the  
 sky, and sank. 240  
 And thither came Geraint, and under-  
 neath  
 Beheld the long street of a little town  
 In a long valley, on one side whereof,  
 White from the mason's hand, a for-  
 tress rose;  
 And on one side a castle in decay,  
 Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry  
 ravine.  
 And out of town and valley came a  
 noise  
 As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
 Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks  
 At distance, ere they settle for the  
 night. 250

And onward to the fortress rode the  
 three,  
 And enter'd, and were lost behind the  
 walls.  
 'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd  
 him to his earth.'  
 And down the long street riding wea-  
 rily,  
 Found every hostel full, and every-  
 where  
 Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot  
 hiss  
 And bustling whistle of the youth  
 who scour'd  
 His master's armor; and of such a  
 one  
 He ask'd, 'What means the tumult in  
 the town?'  
 Who told him, scouring still, 'The  
 sparrow-hawk!' 260  
 Then riding close behind an ancient  
 churl,  
 Who, smitten by the dusty sloping  
 beam,

Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,

Ask'd yet once more what meant the hubbub here?

Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh! the sparrow-hawk!'

Then riding further past an armor-er's,

Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above his work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,

He put the selfsame query, but the man

Not turning round, nor looking at him, said :

Friend, he that labors for the sparrow-hawk

Has little time for idle questioners.'

Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen :

'A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk!

Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck him dead!

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg

The murmur of the world! What is it to me?

O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,

Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks!

Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-mad,

Where can I get me harborage for the night?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy? Speak!'

Whereat the armorer turning all amazed

And seeing one so gay in purple silks,

Came forward with the helmet yet in hand

And answer'd : 'Pardon me, O stranger knight;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,

And there is scanty time for half the work.

Arms? truth! I know not; all are wanted here.

Harborage? truth, good truth, I know not, save,

It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge

Yonder.' He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,

Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine.

There musing sat the hoary-headed earl—

His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,

Once fit for feasts of ceremony—and said :

'Whither, fair son?' to whom Geraint replied,

'O friend, I seek a harborage for the night.'

Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and partake

The slender entertainment of a house

Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd.'

'Thanks, venerable friend,' replied Geraint;

'So that ye do not serve me sparrow-hawks

For supper, I will enter, I will eat

With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast.'

Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed earl,

And answer'd, 'Graver cause than yours is mine

To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk.

But in, go in; for save yourself desire it,

We will not touch upon him even in jest.'

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,

His charger trampling many a prickly star

Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.

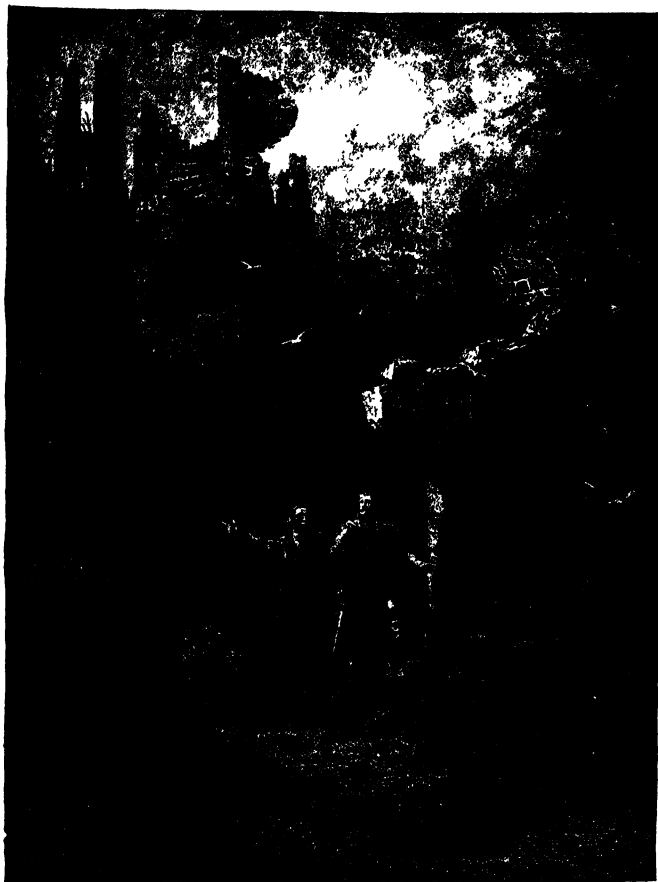
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.

Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with fern;

And here had fallen a great part of a tower,

Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,

And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers;



' And high above a piece of turret stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound  
Bare to the sun '

And high above a piece of turret stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were silent,  
wound <sup>321</sup>  
Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-  
stems  
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred  
arms,  
And suck'd the joining of the stones,  
and look'd  
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a  
grove.

And while he waited in the castle  
court,  
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter,  
rang  
Clear thro' the open casement of the  
hall,  
Singing; and as the sweet voice of a  
bird,  
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
Moves him to think what kind of bird  
it is 331

That sings so delicately clear, and  
 make  
 Conjecture of the plumage and the  
 form,  
 So the sweet voice of Enid moved  
 Geraint,  
 And made him like a man abroad at  
 morn  
 When first the liquid note beloved of  
 men  
 Comes flying over many a windy wave  
 To Britain, and in April suddenly  
 Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with  
 green and red,  
 And he suspends his converse with a  
 friend,  
 Or it may be the labor of his hands,  
 To think or say, 'There is the night-  
 ingale:'  
 So fared it with Geraint, who thought  
 and said,  
 'Here, by God's grace, is the one voice  
 for me.'

It chanced the song that Enid sang  
 was one  
 Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid  
 sang:

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel, and  
 lower the proud;  
 Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm,  
 and cloud;  
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor  
 hate.

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with  
 smile or frown;  
 With that wild wheel we go not up or  
 down;  
 Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

'Smile and we smile, the lords of many  
 lands;  
 Frown and we smile, the lords of our own  
 hands;  
 For man is man and master of his fate.

'Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring  
 crowd;  
 Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the  
 cloud;  
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor  
 hate.'

'Hark, by the bird's song ye may  
 learn the nest,'  
 Said Yniol; 'enter quickly.' Enter-  
 ing then,

Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen  
 stones,  
 The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd  
 hall,  
 He found an ancient dame in dim bro-  
 cade;  
 And near her, like a blossom vermeil-  
 white  
 That lightly breaks a faded flower-  
 sheath,  
 Moved the fair Enid, all in faded  
 silk,  
 Her daughter. In a moment thought  
 Geraint,  
 'Here, by God's rood, is the one maid  
 for me.'  
 But none spake word except the hoary  
 earl:  
 'Enid, the good knight's horse stands  
 in the court;  
 Take him to stall, and give him corn,  
 and then  
 Go to the town and buy us flesh and  
 wine;  
 And we will make us merry as we  
 may.  
 Our hoard is little, but our hearts are  
 great.'

He spake; the prince, as Enid past  
 him, fain  
 To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol  
 caught  
 His purple scarf, and held, and said,  
 'Forbear!  
 Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O  
 my son,  
 Endures not that her guest should  
 serve himself.'  
 And reverencing the custom of the  
 house  
 Geraint, from utter courtesy, forebore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall,  
 And after went her way across the  
 bridge,  
 And reach'd the town, and while the  
 prince and earl  
 Yet spoke together, came again with  
 one,  
 A youth that, following with a costrel,  
 bore  
 The means of goodly welcome, flesh  
 and wine.  
 And Enid brought sweet cakes to make  
 them cheer,

And, in her veil enfolded, manchet  
bread.

And then, because their hall must also  
serve

For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread  
the board,

And stood behind, and waited on the  
three.

And, seeing her so sweet and service-  
able,

Geraint had longing in him evermore  
To stoop and kiss the tender little  
thumb

That crost the trencher as she laid it  
down.

But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
For now the wine made summer in his  
veins,

Let his eye rove in following, or rest  
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,  
Now here, now there, about the dusky  
hall ;

Then suddenly address the hoary earl :

‘Fair host and earl, I pray your  
courtesy ;

This sparrow-hawk, what is he ? tell  
me of him.

His name ? but no, good faith, I will  
not have it ;

For if he be the knight whom late I  
saw

Ride into that new fortress by your  
town,

White from the mason's hand, then  
have I sworn

From his own lips to have it — I am  
Geraint

Of Devon — for this morning when  
the Queen

Sent her own maiden to demand the  
name,

His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen  
thing,

Struck at her with his whip, and she  
return'd

Indignant to the Queen ; and then I  
swore

That I would track this caitiff to his  
hold,

And fight and break his pride, and  
have it of him.

And all unarm'd I rode, and thought  
to find

Arms in your town, where all the men  
are mad ;

They take the rustic murmur of their  
bourg

For the great wave that echoes round  
the world.

They would not hear me speak ; but  
if ye know

Where I can light on arms, or if your-  
self

Should have them, tell me, seeing I  
have sworn

That I will break his pride and learn  
his name,

Avenging this great insult done the  
Queen.’

Then cried Earl Yniol : ‘Art thou  
he indeed,

Geraint, a name far-sounded among  
men

For noble deeds ? and truly I, when  
first

I saw you moving by me on the bridge,  
Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by  
your state

And presence might have guess'd you  
one of those

That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.  
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery ;

For this dear child hath often heard  
me praise

Your feats of arms, and often when I  
paused

Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to  
hear ;

So grateful is the noise of noble deeds  
To noble hearts who see but acts of

wrong.

O, never yet had woman such a pair  
Of suitors as this maiden ; first Li-

mours,

A creature wholly given to brawls and  
wine,

Drunk even when he woo'd ; and be  
he dead

I know not, but he past to the wild  
land.

The second was your foe, the sparrow-  
hawk,

My curse, my nephew — I will not  
let his name

Slip from my lips if I can help it —  
he,

When I that knew him fierce and tur-  
bulent

Refused her to him, then his pride  
awoke :

And since the proud man often is the  
 mean,  
 He sow'd a slander in the common  
 ear,<sup>450</sup>  
 Affirming that his father left him  
 gold,  
 And in my charge, which was not  
 render'd to him;  
 Bribed with large promises the men  
 who served  
 About my person, the more easily  
 Because my means were somewhat  
 broken into  
 Thro' open doors and hospitality;  
 Raised my own town against me in  
 the night  
 Before my Enid's birthday, suck'd my  
 house;  
 From mine own earldom foully ousted  
 me;  
 Built that new fort to overawe my  
 friends,<sup>460</sup>  
 For truly there are those who love  
 me yet;  
 And keeps me in this ruinous castle  
 here,  
 Where doubtless he would put me  
 soon to death  
 But that his pride too much despises  
 me.  
 And I myself sometimes despise my-  
 self;  
 For I have let men be and have their  
 way,  
 Am much too gentle, have not used  
 my power;  
 Nor know I whether I be very base  
 Or very manifold, whether very wise  
 Or very foolish; only this I know,<sup>470</sup>  
 That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
 I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,  
 But can endure it all most patiently.'

'Well said, true heart,' replied Ge-  
 raint, 'but arms,  
 That if the sparrow-hawk, this  
 nephew, fight  
 In next day's tourney I may break his  
 pride.'

And Yniol answer'd: 'Arms, in-  
 deed, but old  
 And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Ge-  
 raint,  
 Are mine, and therefore, at thine ask-  
 ing, thine.

But in this tournament can no man  
 tilt,<sup>480</sup>  
 Except the lady he loves best be there.  
 Two forks are fixt into the meadow  
 ground,  
 And over these is placed a silver wand,  
 And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,  
 The prize of beauty for the fairest  
 there.  
 And this, what knight soever be in  
 field  
 Lays claim to for the lady at his  
 side,  
 And tilts with my good nephew there-  
 upon,  
 Who being apt at arms and big of  
 bone  
 Has ever won it for the lady with  
 him,<sup>490</sup>  
 And toppling over all antagonism  
 Has earn'd himself the name of spar-  
 row-hawk.  
 But thou, that hast no lady, canst not  
 fight.'

To whom Geraint with eyes all  
 bright replied,  
 Leaning a little toward him: 'Thy  
 leave!  
 Let me lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
 For this dear child, because I never  
 saw,  
 Tho' having seen all beauties of our  
 time,  
 Nor can see elsewhere, anything so  
 fair.  
 And if I fall her name will yet remain  
 Untarnish'd as before; but if I live,<sup>501</sup>  
 So aid me heaven when at mine utter-  
 most  
 As I will make her truly my true  
 wife!'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's  
 heart  
 Danced in his bosom, seeing better  
 days.  
 And looking round he saw not Enid  
 there—  
 Who hearing her own name had stolen  
 away—  
 But that old dame, to whom full ten-  
 derly  
 And fondling all her hand in his he  
 said:  
 'Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,

And best by her that bore her under-  
stood.

Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to  
rest

Tell her, and prove her heart toward  
the prince.'

So spake the kindly-hearted earl,  
and she

With frequent smile and nod depart-  
ing found,

Half disarray'd as to her rest, the  
girl;

Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek,  
and then

On either shining shoulder laid a hand,  
And kept her off and gazed upon her

face,  
And told her all their converse in the

hall,

Proving her heart. But never light  
and shade

Coursed one another more on open  
ground

Beneath a troubled heaven than red  
and pale

Across the face of Enid hearing her;  
While slowly falling as a scale that

falls,  
When weight is added only grain by

grain,  
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle

breast;  
Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a

word,  
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of

it.  
So moving without answer to her rest

She found no rest, and ever fail'd to  
draw

The quiet night into her blood, but  
lay

Contemplating her own unworthiness;  
And when the pale and bloodless east

began  
To quicken to the sun, arose, and

raised  
Her mother too, and hand in hand

they moved  
Down to the meadow where the jousts

were held,  
And waited there for Yniol and Ge-  
raint.

And thither came the twain, and  
when Geraint

Beheld her first in field, awaiting  
him,

He felt, were she the prize of bodily  
force,

Himself beyond the rest pushing could  
move

The Chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted  
arms

Were on his princely person, but thro'  
these

Prince-like his bearing shone; and  
errant knights

And ladies came, and by and by the  
town

Flow'd in and settling circled all the  
lists.

And there they fixt the forks into the  
ground,

And over these they placed the silver  
wand,

And over that the golden sparrow-  
hawk.

Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet  
blown,

Spake to the lady with him and pro-  
claim'd,

'Advance and take, the fairest of the  
fair,

What I these two years past have  
won for thee,

The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake  
the prince,

'Forbear; there is a worthier,' and  
the knight

With some surprise and thrice as much  
disdain

Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all  
his face

Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at  
Yule,

So burnt he was with passion, crying  
out,

'Do battle for it then,' no more; and  
thrice

They clash'd together, and thrice they  
brake their spears.

Then each, dishorsed and drawing,  
lash'd at each

So often and with such blows that all  
the crowd

Wonder'd, and now and then from  
distant walls

There came a clapping as of phantom  
hands.

So twice they fought, and twice they  
breathed, and still

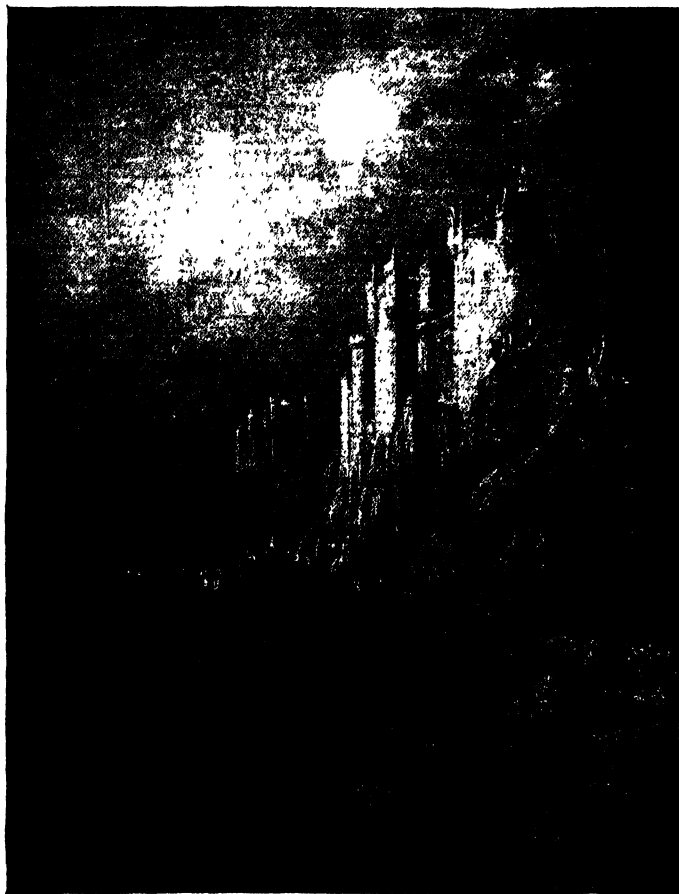


The dew of their great labor and the blood  
 Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd  
 their force.  
 But either's force was match'd till  
 Yniol's cry, <sup>570</sup>  
 'Remember that great insult done the  
 Queen,'  
 Increased Geraint's, who heaved his  
 blade aloft,  
 And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit  
 the bone,  
 And fell'd him, and set foot upon his  
 breast,  
 And said, 'Thy name?' To whom  
 the fallen man  
 Made answer, groaning: 'Edyrn, son  
 of Nudd!  
 Ashamed am I that I should tell it  
 thee.  
 My pride is broken; men have seen  
 my fall.'  
 'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied  
 Geraint,  
 'These two things shalt thou do, or  
 else thou diest. <sup>580</sup>  
 First, thou thyself, with damsel and  
 with dwarf,  
 Shalt ride to Arthur's court and, com-  
 ing there,  
 Crave pardon for that insult done the  
 Queen,  
 And shalt abide her judgment on it;  
 next,  
 Thou shalt give back their earldom to  
 thy kin.  
 These two things shalt thou do, or  
 thou shalt die.'  
 And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things  
 will I do,  
 For I have never yet been overthrown,  
 And thou hast overthrown me, and  
 my pride  
 Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall!'  
 And rising up he rode to Arthur's  
 court, <sup>591</sup>  
 And there the Queen forgave him eas-  
 ily.  
 And, being young, he changed and  
 came to loathe  
 His crime of traitor, slowly drew him-  
 self  
 Bright from his old dark life, and fell  
 at last  
 In the great battle fighting for the  
 King.

But when the third day from the  
 hunting-morn  
 Made a low splendor in the world, and  
 wings  
 Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay  
 With her fair head in the dim-yellow  
 light, <sup>600</sup>  
 Among the dancing shadows of the  
 birds,  
 Woke and bethought her of her pro-  
 mise given  
 No later than last eve to Prince Ge-  
 raint—  
 So bent he seem'd on going the third  
 day,  
 He would not leave her till her pro-  
 mise given—  
 To ride with him this morning to the  
 court,  
 And there be made known to the  
 stately Queen,  
 And there be wedded with all cere-  
 mony.  
 At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,  
 And thought it never yet had look'd  
 so mean. <sup>610</sup>  
 For as a leaf in mid-November is  
 To what it was in mid-October, seem'd  
 The dress that now she look'd on to  
 the dress  
 She look'd on ere the coming of Ge-  
 raint.  
 And still she look'd, and still the ter-  
 ror grew  
 Of that strange bright and dreadful  
 thing, a court,  
 All staring at her in her faded silk;  
 And softly to her own sweet heart she  
 said:  
 'This noble prince who won our  
 earldom back,  
 So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
 Sweet heaven, how much I shall dis-  
 credit him! <sup>621</sup>  
 Would he could tarry with us here  
 awhile,  
 But being so beholden to the prince,  
 It were but little grace in any of us,  
 Bent as he seem'd on going this third  
 day,  
 To seek a second favor at his hands.  
 Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
 Myself would work eye dim and finger  
 lame  
 Far liefer than so much discredit him.'

And Enid fell in longing for a  
 dress  
 All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a<sup>630</sup>  
 costly gift  
 Of her good mother, given her on the  
 night  
 Before her birthday, three sad years  
 ago,  
 That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd  
 their house  
 And scatter'd all they had to all the  
 winds;

For while the mother show'd it, and  
 the two  
 Were turning and admiring it, the  
 work  
 To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
 That Edyrn's men were on them, and  
 they fled  
 With little save the jewels they had on,  
 Which being sold and sold had bought  
 them bread.<sup>641</sup>  
 And Edyrn's men had caught them in  
 their flight,



"First, thou thyself, with damsel and with dwarf,  
 Shalt ride to Arthur's court"

And placed them in this ruin ; and  
 she wish'd  
 The prince had found her in her an-  
 cient home ;  
 Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
 And roam the goodly places that she  
 knew ;  
 And last bethought her how she used  
 to watch,  
 Near that old home, a pool of golden  
 carp ;  
 And one was patch'd and blurr'd and  
 lustreless  
 Among his burnish'd brethren of the  
 pool ;  
 And half asleep she made comparison<sup>650</sup>  
 Of that and these to her own faded self  
 And the gay court, and fell asleep  
 again,  
 And dreamt herself was such a faded  
 form  
 Among her burnish'd sisters of the  
 pool.  
 But this was in the garden of a king,  
 And tho' she lay dark in the pool she  
 knew  
 That all was bright ; that all about  
 were birds  
 Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work ;  
 That all the turf was rich in plots that  
 look'd<sup>660</sup>  
 Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;  
 And lords and ladies of the high court  
 went  
 In silver tissue talking things of state ;  
 And children of the King in cloth of  
 gold  
 Glanced at the doors or gambol'd  
 down the walks.  
 And while she thought, 'They will  
 not see me,' came  
 A stately queen whose name was  
 Guinevere,  
 And all the children in their cloth of  
 gold  
 Ran to her, crying, 'If we have fish  
 at all  
 Let them be gold ; and charge the  
 gardeners now<sup>670</sup>  
 To pick the faded creature from the  
 pool,  
 And cast it on the mixen that it die.'  
 And therewithal one came and seized  
 on her,  
 And Enid started waking, with her  
 heart

All overshadowed by the foolish dream,  
 And lo ! it was her mother grasping her  
 To get her well awake ; and in her hand  
 A suit of bright apparel, which she laid  
 Flat on the couch, and spoke exult-  
 ingly :

'See here, my child, how fresh the  
 colors look,<sup>680</sup>  
 How fast they hold, like colors of a  
 shell  
 That keeps the wear and polish of the  
 wave.  
 Why not ? It never yet was worn, I  
 trow :  
 Look on it, child, and tell me if ye  
 know it.'

And Enid look'd, but, all confused  
 at first,  
 Could scarce divide it from her foolish  
 dream.  
 Then suddenly she knew it and re-  
 joiced,  
 And answer'd, 'Yea, I know it ; your  
 good gift,  
 So sadly lost on that unhappy night ;  
 Your own good gift !' 'Yea, surely,'  
 said the dame,<sup>690</sup>  
 'And gladly given again this happy  
 morn.  
 For when the jousts were ended yes-  
 terday,  
 Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-  
 where  
 He found the sack and plunder of our  
 house  
 All scatter'd thro' the houses of the  
 town,  
 And gave command that all which  
 once was ours  
 Should now be ours again ; and yester-  
 eve,  
 While ye were talking sweetly with  
 your prince,  
 Came one with this and laid it in my  
 hand,  
 For love or fear, or seeking favor of  
 us,<sup>700</sup>  
 Because we have our earldom back  
 again.  
 And yester-eve I would not tell you  
 of it,  
 But kept it for a sweet surprise at  
 morn.  
 Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?

For I myself unwillingly have worn  
 My faded suit, as you, my child, have  
     yours,  
 And, howsoever patient, Yniol his.  
 Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly  
     house,  
 With store of rich apparel, sumptuous  
     fare,  
 And page, and maid, and squire, and  
     seneschal, <sup>710</sup>  
 And pastime both of hawk and hound,  
     and all  
 That appertains to noble maintenance.  
 Yea, and he brought me to a goodly  
     house;  
 But since our fortune swerved from  
     sun to shade,  
 And all thro' that young traitor, cruel  
     need  
 Constrain'd us, but a better time has  
     come.  
 So clothe yourself in this, that better  
     fits  
 Our mended fortunes and a prince's  
     bride,  
 For tho' ye won the prize of fairest  
     fair,  
 And tho' I heard him call you fairest  
     fair, <sup>720</sup>  
 Let never maiden think, however fair,  
 She is not fairer in new clothes than  
     old.  
 And should some great court-lady say,  
     the prince  
 Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the  
     hedge,  
 And like a madman brought her to  
     the court,  
 Then were ye shamed, and, worse,  
     might shame the prince  
 To whom we are beholden; but I  
     know,  
 When my dear child is set forth at her  
     best,  
 That neither court nor country, tho'  
     they sought  
 Thro' all the provinces like those of old  
 That lighted on Queen Esther, has her  
     match.' <sup>731</sup>

Here ceased the kindly mother out  
     of breath,  
 And Enid listen'd brightening as she  
     lay;  
 Then, as the white and glittering star  
     of morn

Parts from a bank of snow, by and by  
 Slips into golden cloud, the maiden  
     rose,  
 And left her maiden couch, and robed  
     herself,  
 Help'd by the mother's careful hand  
     and eye,  
 Without a mirror, in the gorgeous  
     gown;  
 Who, after, turn'd her daughter round,  
     and said <sup>740</sup>  
 She never yet had seen her half so fair;  
 And call'd her like that maiden in the  
     tale,  
 Whom Gwydion made by glamour out  
     of flowers,  
 And sweeter than the bride of Cassive-  
     laun,  
 Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar  
     first  
 Invaded Britain: 'But we beat him  
     back,  
 As this great prince invaded us, and  
     we,  
 Not beat him back, but welcomed him  
     with joy.  
 And I can scarcely ride with you to  
     court,  
 For old am I, and rough the ways and  
     wild; <sup>750</sup>  
 But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall  
     dream  
 I see my princess as I see her now,  
 Clothed with my gift and gay among  
     the gay.'

But while the women thus rejoiced,  
     Geraint  
 Woke where he slept in the high hall,  
     and call'd  
 For Enid, and when Yniol made report  
 Of that good mother making Enid gay  
 In such apparel as might well beseem  
 His princess, or indeed the stately  
     Queen,  
 He answer'd: 'Earl, entreat her by my  
     love, <sup>760</sup>  
 Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
 That she ride with me in her faded  
     silk.'  
 Yniol with that hard message went; it  
     fell  
 Like flaws in summer laying lusty  
     corn;  
 For Enid, all abash'd, she knew not  
     why,

Dared not to glance at her good  
 mother's face,  
 But silently, in all obedience,  
 Her mother silent too, nor helping  
 her,  
 Laid from her limbs the costly-broid-  
 er'd gift,  
 And robed them in her ancient suit  
 again, <sup>770</sup>  
 And so descended. Never man rejoiced  
 More than Geraint to greet her thus  
 attired;  
 And glancing all at once as keenly at  
 her  
 As careful robins eye the delver's toil,  
 Made her cheek burn and either eyelid  
 fall,  
 But rested with her sweet face satis-  
 fied;  
 Then seeing cloud upon the mother's  
 brow,  
 Her by both hands he caught, and  
 sweetly said:

'O my new mother, be not wroth or  
 grieved  
 At thy new son, for my petition to  
 her. <sup>780</sup>  
 When late I left Caerleon, our great  
 Queen,  
 In words whose echo lasts, they were  
 so sweet,  
 Made promise that, whatever bride I  
 brought,  
 Herself would clothe her like the sun  
 in heaven.  
 Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd  
 hall,  
 Beholding one so bright in dark estate,  
 I vow'd that, could I gain her, our fair  
 Queen,  
 No hand but hers, should make your  
 Enid burst  
 Sunlike from cloud — and likewise  
 thought perhaps,  
 That service done so graciously would  
 bind <sup>790</sup>  
 The two together; fain I would the  
 two  
 Should love each other. How can Enid  
 find  
 A nobler friend? Another thought  
 was mine:  
 I came among you here so suddenly  
 That tho' her gentle presence at the  
 lists

Might well have served for proof that  
 I was loved,  
 I doubted whether daughter's tender-  
 ness,  
 Or easy nature, might not let itself  
 Be moulded by your wishes for her  
 weal;  
 Or whether some false sense in her  
 own self <sup>800</sup>  
 Of my contrasting brightness overbore  
 Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall,  
 And such a sense might make her long  
 for court  
 And all its perilous glories; and I  
 thought,  
 That could I somehow prove such force  
 in her  
 Link'd with such love for me that at  
 a word,  
 No reason given her, she could cast  
 aside  
 A splendor dear to women, new to her,  
 And therefore dearer; or if not so new,  
 Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the  
 power <sup>810</sup>  
 Of intermitted usage; then I felt  
 That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and  
 flows,  
 Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I  
 do rest,  
 A prophet certain of my prophecy,  
 That never shadow of mistrust can  
 cross  
 Between us. Grant me pardon for my  
 thoughts;  
 And for my strange petition I will  
 make  
 Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,  
 When your fair child shall wear your  
 costly gift  
 Beside your own warm hearth, with,  
 on her knees, <sup>820</sup>  
 Who knows? another gift of the high  
 God,  
 Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to  
 lisp you thanks.'

He spoke; the mother smiled, but  
 half in tears,  
 Then brought a mantle down and  
 wrapt her in it,  
 And claspt and kiss'd her, and they  
 rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere  
 had climb'd

The giant tower, from whose high  
 crest, they say,  
 Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
 And white sails flying on the yellow  
 sea;  
 But not to goodly hill or yellow sea <sup>830</sup>  
 Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale  
 of Usk,  
 By the flat meadow, till she saw them  
 come;  
 And then descending met them at the  
 gates,  
 Embraced her with all welcome as a  
 friend,  
 And did her honor as the prince's  
 bride,  
 And clothed her for her bridals like  
 the sun;  
 And all that week was old Caerleon  
 gay,  
 For by the hands of Dubric, the high  
 saint,  
 They twain were wedded with all  
 ceremony.

And this was on the last year's  
 Whitsuntide. <sup>840</sup>  
 But Enid ever kept the faded silk,  
 Remembering how first he came on  
 her  
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved  
 her in it,  
 And all her foolish fears about the  
 dress,  
 And all his journey toward her, as  
 himself  
 Had told her, and their coming to the  
 court.

And now this morning when he said  
 to her,  
 'Put on your worst and meanest dress,'  
 she found  
 And took it, and array'd herself therein.

## GERAINT AND ENID

O PURBLIND race of miserable men,  
 How many among us at this very hour  
 Do forge a lifelong trouble for our-  
 selves,  
 By taking true for false, or false for  
 true;  
 Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this  
 world

Groping, how many, until we pass and  
 reach  
 That other where we see as we are  
 seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issu-  
 ing forth  
 That morning, when they both had got  
 to horse,  
 Perhaps because he loved her passion-  
 ately, <sup>10</sup>  
 And felt that tempest brooding round  
 his heart  
 Which, if he spoke at all, would break  
 perforce  
 Upon a head so dear in thunder, said:  
 'Not at my side. I charge thee ride  
 before,

Ever a good way on before; and this  
 I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,  
 Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
 No, not a word!' and Enid was aghast;  
 And forth they rode, but scarce three  
 paces on,

When crying out, 'Effeminate as I am,  
 I will not fight my way with gilded  
 arms, <sup>21</sup>

All shall be iron;' he loosed a mighty  
 purse,  
 Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward  
 the squire.

So the last sight that Enid had of home  
 Was all the marble threshold flashing,  
 strown

With gold and scatter'd coinage, and  
 the squire

Chafing his shoulder. Then he cried  
 again,

'To the wilds!' and Enid leading down  
 the tracks

Thro' which he bade her lead him on,  
 they past

The marches, and by bandit-haunted  
 holds, <sup>30</sup>

Gray swamps and pools, waste places  
 of the hern,

And wildernesses, perilous paths, they  
 rode.

Round was their pace at first, but  
 slacken'd soon.

A stranger meeting them had surely  
 thought,

They rode so slowly and they look'd  
 so pale,

That each had suffer'd some exceeding  
 wrong.

For he was ever saying to himself,  
 'O, I that wasted time to tend upon  
 her,  
 To compass her with sweet observ-  
 ances,  
 To dress her beautifully and keep her  
 true' —  
 And there he broke the sentence in his  
 heart  
 Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue  
 May break it when his passion masters  
 him.  
 And she was ever praying the sweet  
 heavens  
 To save her dear lord whole from any  
 wound.  
 And ever in her mind she cast about  
 For that unnoticed failing in her-  
 self  
 Which made him look so cloudy and  
 so cold;  
 Till the great plover's human whistle  
 amazed  
 Her heart, and glancing round the  
 waste she fear'd  
 In every wavering brake an ambus-  
 cade;  
 Then thought again, 'If there be such  
 in me,  
 I might amend it by the grace of Hea-  
 ven,  
 If he would only speak and tell me of  
 it.'

But when the fourth part of the day  
 was gone,  
 Then Enid was aware of three tall  
 knights  
 On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a  
 rock  
 In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs  
 all;  
 And heard one crying to his fellow,  
 'Look,  
 Here comes a laggard hanging down  
 his head,  
 Who seems no bolder than a beaten  
 hound;  
 Come, we will slay him and will have  
 his horse  
 And armor, and his damsel shall be  
 ours.'

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart,  
 and said:  
 'I will go back a little to my lord,

And I will tell him all their caitiff  
 talk;  
 For, be he wroth even to slaying  
 me,  
 Far liefer by his dear hand had I die  
 Than that my lord should suffer loss  
 or shame.'

Then she went back some paces of  
 return,  
 Met his full frown timidly firm, and  
 said:  
 'My lord, I saw three bandits by the  
 rock  
 Waiting to fall on you, and heard  
 them boast  
 That they would slay you, and pos-  
 sess your horse  
 And armor, and your damsel should  
 be theirs.'

He made a wrathful answer: 'Did  
 I wish  
 Your warning or your silence? one  
 command  
 I laid upon you, not to speak to me,  
 And thus ye keep it! Well then,  
 look — for now,  
 Whether ye wish me victory or de-  
 feat,  
 Long for my life or hunger for my  
 death,  
 Yourself shall see my vigor is not  
 lost.'

Then Enid waited pale and sorrow-  
 ful,  
 And down upon him bare the bandit  
 three.  
 And at the midmost charging, Prince  
 Geraint  
 Drave the long spear a cubit thro' his  
 breast  
 And out beyond; and then against  
 his brace  
 Of comrades, each of whom had  
 broken on him  
 A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,  
 Swung from his brand a windy buffet  
 out  
 Once, twice, to right, to left, and  
 stunn'd the twain  
 Or slew them, and dismounting, like a  
 man  
 That skins the wild beast after slay-  
 ing him,

Stript from the three dead wolves of  
 woman born  
 The three gay suits of armor which  
 they wore,  
 And let the bodies lie, but bound the  
 suits  
 Of armor on their horses, each on each,  
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the  
 three  
 Together, and said to her, 'Drive  
 them on  
 Before you;' and she drove them  
 thro' the waste. 100

He follow'd nearer; ruth began to  
 work  
 Against his anger in him, while he  
 watch'd  
 The being he loved best in all the  
 world,  
 With difficulty in mild obedience  
 Driving them on. He fain had spoken  
 to her,  
 And loosed in words of sudden fire  
 the wrath  
 And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him  
 all within;  
 But evermore it seem'd an easier  
 thing  
 At once without remorse to strike her  
 dead  
 Than to cry 'Halt,' and to her own  
 bright face 110  
 Accuse her of the least immodesty:  
 And thus tongue-tied, it made him  
 wroth the more  
 That she *could* speak whom his own  
 ear had heard  
 Call herself false, and suffering thus  
 he made  
 Minutes an age; but in scarce longer  
 time  
 Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,  
 Before he turn to fall seaward again,  
 Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, be-  
 hold  
 In the first shallow shade of a deep  
 wood,  
 Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted  
 oaks, 120  
 Three other horsemen waiting, wholly  
 arm'd,  
 Whereof one seem'd far larger than  
 her lord,  
 And shook her pulses, crying, 'Look,  
 a prize!

Three horses and three goodly suits of  
 arms,  
 And all in charge of whom? a girl!  
 set on.'  
 'Nay,' said the second, 'yonder comes  
 a knight.'  
 The third, 'A craven; how he hangs  
 his head!'  
 The giant answer'd merrily, 'Yea,  
 but one?  
 Wait here, and when he passes fall  
 upon him!'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and  
 said: 130  
 'I will abide the coming of my lord,  
 And I will tell him all their villainy.  
 My lord is weary with the fight before,  
 And they will fall upon him unawares.  
 I needs must disobey him for his  
 good;  
 How should I dare obey him to his  
 harm?  
 Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill  
 me for it,  
 I save a life dearer to me than mine.'

And she abode his coming, and said  
 to him  
 With timid firmness, 'Have I leave to  
 speak?' 140  
 He said, 'Ye take it, speaking,' and  
 she spoke:

'There lurk three villains yonder in  
 the wood,  
 And each of them is wholly arm'd,  
 and one  
 Is larger-limb'd than you are, and  
 they say  
 That they will fall upon you while ye  
 pass.'

To which he flung a wrathful an-  
 swer back:  
 'And if there were an hundred in the  
 wood,  
 And every man were larger-limb'd  
 than I,  
 And all at once should sally out upon  
 me,  
 I swear it would not ruffle me so  
 much 150  
 As you that not obey me. Stand  
 aside,  
 And if I fall, cleave to the better man.'



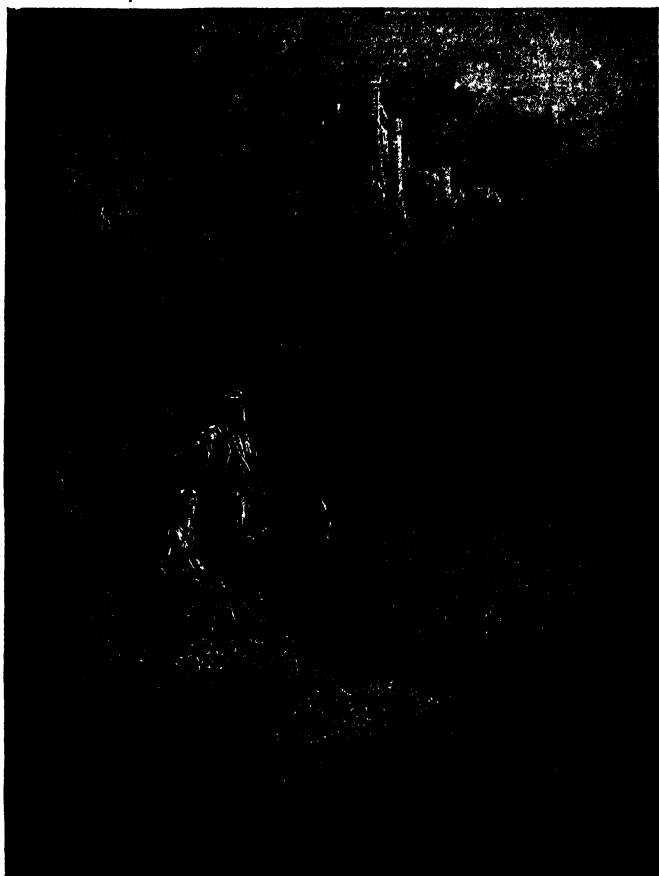
And Enid stood aside to wait the event,  
 Not dare to watch the combat, only breathe.  
 Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a breath,  
 And he she dreaded most bare down upon him.  
 Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ;  
 but Geraint's,  
 A little in the late encounter strain'd,  
 Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corselet home,  
 And then brake short, and down his enemy roll'd,  
 And there lay still ; as he that tells <sup>160</sup>  
 the tale  
 Saw once a great piece of a promontory,  
 That had a sapling growing on it, slide  
 From the long shore-cliff's windy walls to the beach,  
 And there lie still, and yet the sapling grew ;  
 So lay the man transfixt. His craven pair  
 Of comrades making slower at the prince,  
 When now they saw their bulwark fallen, stood ;  
 On whom the victor, to confound them more,  
 Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry ; for <sup>170</sup>  
 as one,  
 That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,  
 All thro' the crash of the near cataract hears  
 The drumming thunder of the huger fall  
 At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear  
 His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,  
 And foemen scared, like that false pair who turn'd  
 Flying, but, overtaken, died the death  
 Themselves had wrought on many an innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting,  
 pick'd the lance  
 That pleased him best, and drew from those dead wolves <sup>180</sup>  
 Their three gay suits of armor, each from each,

And bound them on their horses, each on each,  
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
 Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on  
 Before you,' and she drove them thro' the wood.

He follow'd nearer still. The pain she had  
 To keep them in the wild ways of the wood,  
 Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,  
 Together, served a little to disedge  
 The sharpness of that pain about her heart ;  
 And they themselves, like creatures <sup>190</sup>  
 gently born  
 But into bad hands fallen, and now so long  
 By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light ears, and felt  
 Her low firm voice and tender government.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood they past,  
 And issuing under open heavens beheld  
 A little town with towers, upon a rock,  
 And close beneath, a meadow gemlike chased  
 In the brown wild, and mowers mowing in it ;  
 And down a rocky pathway from the place <sup>200</sup>  
 There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in his hand  
 Bare victual for the mowers ; and Geraint  
 Had ruth again on Enid looking pale.  
 Then, moving downward, to the meadow ground,  
 He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by him, said,  
 'Friend, let her eat ; the damsel is so faint.'  
 'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth ;  
 'and thou,  
 My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,  
 And only meet for mowers ;' then set down



“Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so faint”

His basket, and dismounting on the  
 sward<sup>210</sup>  
 They let the horses graze, and ate  
 themselves.  
 And Enid took a little delicately,  
 Less having stomach for it than de-  
 sire  
 To close with her lord's pleasure, but  
 Geraint  
 Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,  
 And when he found all empty was  
 amazed;

And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten all,  
 but take  
 A horse and arms for guerdon; choose  
 the best.'  
 He, reddening in extremity of de-  
 light,  
 'My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold.'  
 'Ye will be all the wealthier,' cried<sup>221</sup>  
 the prince.  
 'I take it as free gift, then,' said the  
 boy,  
 'Not guerdon; for myself can easily,

While your good damsel rests, return  
 and fetch  
 Fresh victual for these mowers of our  
 earl;  
 For these are his, and all the field is  
 his,  
 And I myself am his; and I will tell  
 him  
 How great a man thou art. He loves  
 to know  
 When men of mark are in his territory;  
 And he will have thee to his palace  
 here, <sup>230</sup>  
 And serve thee costlier than with  
 mowers' fare.'

Then said Geraint: 'I wish no bet-  
 ter fare;  
 I never ate with angrier appetite  
 Than when I left your mowers dinner-  
 less,  
 And into no earl's palace will I go.  
 I know, God knows, too much of pal-  
 aces!  
 And if he want me, let him come to  
 me.  
 But hire us some fair chamber for the  
 night,  
 And stalling for the horses, and return  
 With victual for these men, and let us  
 know.' <sup>240</sup>

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the glad  
 youth, and went,  
 Held his head high, and thought him-  
 self a knight,  
 And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,  
 Leading the horse, and they were left  
 alone.

But when the prince had brought  
 his errant eyes  
 Home from the rock, sideways he let  
 them glance  
 At Enid, where she droopt. His own  
 false doom,  
 That shadow of mistrust should never  
 cross  
 Betwixt them, came upon him, and he  
 sigh'd;  
 Then with another humorous ruth re-  
 mark'd <sup>250</sup>  
 The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,  
 And watch'd the sun blaze on the  
 turning scythe,  
 And after nodded sleepily in the heat.

But she, remembering her old ruin'd  
 hall,  
 And all the windy clamor of the daws  
 About her hollow turret, pluck'd the  
 grass  
 There growing longest by the mea-  
 dow's edge,  
 And into many a listless annulet,  
 Now over, now beneath her marriage  
 ring,  
 Wove and unweave it, till the boy re-  
 turn'd <sup>260</sup>  
 And told them of a chamber, and they  
 went;  
 Where, after saying to her, 'If ye will,  
 Call for the woman of the house,' to  
 which  
 She answer'd, 'Thanks, my lord;' the  
 two remain'd  
 Apart by all the chamber's width, and  
 mute  
 As creatures voiceless thro' the fault  
 of birth,  
 Or two wild men supporters of a  
 shield,  
 Painted, who stare at open space, nor  
 glance  
 The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along  
 the street, <sup>270</sup>  
 And heel against the pavement echo-  
 ing, burst  
 Their drowse; and either started while  
 the door,  
 Push'd from without, drave backward  
 to the wall,  
 And midst of a rout of roisterers,  
 Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,  
 Her suitor in old years before Geraint  
 Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,  
 Limours.  
 He moving up with pliant courtliness  
 Greeted Geraint full face, but stealth-  
 ily,  
 In the mid-warmth of welcome and  
 graspt hand, <sup>280</sup>  
 Found Enid with the corner of his eye,  
 And knew her sitting sad and solitary.  
 Then cried Geraint for wine and  
 goodly cheer  
 To feed the sudden guest, and sump-  
 tuously,  
 According to his fashion, bade the host  
 Call in what men soever were his  
 friends,

And feast with these in honor of their earl;  
 'And care not for the cost; the cost is mine.'

And wine and food were brought,  
 and Earl Limours  
 Drank till he jested with all ease, and told<sup>290</sup>  
 Free tales, and took the word and play'd upon it,  
 And made it of two colors; for his talk,  
 When wine and free companions kindled him,  
 Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem  
 Of fifty facets; thus he moved the prince  
 To laughter and his comrades to applause.  
 Then when the prince was merry, ask'd Limours,  
 'Your leave, my lord, to cross the room, and speak  
 To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
 And seems so lonely?' 'My free leave,' he said;<sup>300</sup>  
 'Get her to speak; she doth not speak to me.'  
 Then rose Limours, and looking at his feet,  
 Like him who tries the bridge he fears may fail,  
 Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,  
 Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisperingly:

'Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,  
 Enid, my early and my only love,  
 Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd me wild —  
 What chance is this? how is it I see you here?  
 Ye are in my power at last, are in my power.<sup>310</sup>  
 Yet fear me not; I call mine own self wild,  
 But keep a touch of sweet civility  
 Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.  
 I thought, but that your father came between,  
 In former days you saw me favorably.

And if it were so do not keep it back.  
 Make me a little happier; let me know it.

Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?

Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.

And, Enid, you and he, I see with joy,<sup>320</sup>

Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,  
 You come with no attendance, page or maid,

To serve you — doth he love you as of old?

For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know

Tho' men may bicker with the things they love,

They would not make them laughable in all eyes,

Not while they loved them; and your wretched dress,

A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks

Your story, that this man loves you no more.

Your beauty is no beauty to him now.  
 A common chance — right well I know it — pall'd —<sup>331</sup>

For I know men; nor will ye win him back,

For the man's love once gone never returns.

But here is one who loves you as of old;

With more exceeding passion than of old.

Good, speak the word; my followers ring him round.

He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up; They understand. Nay, I do not mean blood;

Nor need ye look so scared at what I say.

My malice is no deeper than a moat,  
 No stronger than a wall. There is the keep;<sup>341</sup>

He shall not cross us more; speak but the word.

Or speak it not; but then by Him that made me

The one true lover whom you ever own'd,

I will make use of all the power I have.

O, pardon me! the madness of that hour

When first I parted from thee moves  
me yet.

At this the tender sound of his own  
voice  
And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,  
Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd  
his eyes, <sup>350</sup>  
Moist as they were, wine-heated from  
the feast,  
And answer'd with such craft as women  
use,  
Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance  
That breaks upon them perilously, and  
said:

'Earl, if you love me as in former  
years,  
And do not practise on me, come with  
morn,  
And snatch me from him as by vio-  
lence.  
Leave me to-night; I am weary to the  
death.'

Low at leave-taking, with his bran-  
dish'd plume  
Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-  
amorous earl, <sup>360</sup>  
And the stout prince bade him a loud  
good-night.  
He moving homeward babbled to his  
men,  
How Enid never loved a man but him,  
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her  
lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Ge-  
raint,  
Debating his command of silence  
given,  
And that she now perforce must vio-  
late it,  
Held commune with herself, and while  
she held  
He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart  
To wake him, but hung o'er him,  
wholly pleased <sup>370</sup>  
To find him yet unwounded after fight,  
And hear him breathing low and  
equally.  
Anon she rose and, stepping lightly,  
heap'd  
The pieces of his armor in one place,  
All to be there against a sudden  
need;

Then dozed awhile herself, but, over  
toil'd

By that day's grief and travel, ever-  
more

Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn,  
and then

Went slipping down horrible preci-  
pices,

And strongly striking out her limbs  
awoke; <sup>380</sup>

Then thought she heard the wild earl  
at the door,

With all his rout of random followers.  
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, sum-  
moning her;

Which was the red cock shouting to  
the light,

As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy  
world

And glimmer'd on his armor in the  
room.

And once again she rose to look at it,  
But touch'd it unawares; jangling, the  
casque

Fell, and he started up and stared at  
her.

Then breaking his command of silence  
given, <sup>390</sup>

She told him all that Earl Limours had  
said,

Except the passage that he loved her  
not;

Nor left untold the craft herself had  
used,

But ended with apology so sweet,  
Low-spoken, and of so few words, and  
seem'd

So justified by that necessity,  
That tho' he thought, 'Was it for him  
she wept

In Devon?' he but gave a wrathful  
groan,

Saying, 'Your sweet faces make good  
fellows fools

And traitors. Call the host and bid  
him bring <sup>400</sup>

Charger and palfrey.' So she glided  
out

Among the heavy breathings of the  
house,

And like a household spirit at the walls  
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and  
return'd;

Then tending her rough lord, tho' all  
unask'd,

In silence, did him service as a squire;

Till issuing arm'd he found the host  
and cried,  
'Thy reckoning, friend?' and ere he  
learnt it, 'Take  
Five horses and their armors;' and the  
host,  
Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,  
'My lord, I scarce have spent the worth  
of one!'  
'Ye will be all the wealthier,' said the  
prince,  
And then to Enid, 'Forward! and to-  
day  
I charge you, Enid, more especially,  
What thing soever ye may hear, or  
see,  
Or fancy — tho' I count it of small use  
To charge you — that ye speak not but  
obey.'

And Enid answer'd: 'Yea, my lord,  
I know  
Your wish and would obey; but, rid-  
ing first,  
I hear the violent threats you do not  
hear,  
I see the danger which you cannot see.  
Then not to give you warning, that  
seems hard,  
Almost beyond me; yet I would obey.'

'Yea so,' said he, 'do it; be not too  
wise,  
Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,  
Not all mismated with a yawning  
clown,  
But one with arms to guard his head  
and yours,  
With eyes to find you out howeyer far,  
And ears to hear you even in his  
dreams.'

With that he turn'd and look'd as  
keenly at her  
As careful robins eye the delver's toil;  
And that within her which a wanton  
fool  
Or hasty judger would have call'd her  
guilt  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid  
fall.  
And Geraint look'd and was not satis-  
fied.

Then forward by a way which,  
beaten broad,

Led from the territory of false Limours  
To the waste earldom of another earl,  
Doorn, whom his shaking vassals  
call'd the Bull,  
Went Enid with her sullen follower  
on.  
Once she look'd back, and when she  
saw him ride  
More near by many a rood than yester-  
morn,  
It wellnigh made her cheerful; till  
Geraint,  
Waving an angry hand as who should  
say,  
'Ye watch me,' sadden'd all her heart  
again.  
But while the sun yet beat a dewy  
blade,  
The sound of many a heavily-galloping  
hoof  
Smote on her ear, and turning round  
she saw  
Dust, and the points of lances bicker  
in it.  
Then, not to disobey her lord's behest,  
And yet to give him warning, for he  
rode  
As if he heard not, moving back she  
held  
Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.  
At which the warrior in his obstinacy,  
Because she kept the letter of his word,  
Was in a manner pleased, and turning  
stood.  
And in the moment after, wild Li-  
mours,  
Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-  
cloud  
Whose skirts are loosen'd by the break-  
ing storm,  
Half ridden off with by the thing he  
rode,  
And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,  
Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with  
him, and bore  
Down by the length of lance and arm  
beyond  
The crupper, and so left him stunn'd  
or dead,  
And overthrew the next that follow'd  
him,  
And blindly rush'd on all the rout be-  
hind.  
But at the flash and motion of the man  
They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a  
shoal

Of darting fish, that on a summer morn  
 Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot  
 Come slipping o'er their shadows on  
 the sand, <sup>471</sup>  
 But if a man who stands upon the brink  
 But lift a shining hand against the sun,  
 There is not left the twinkle of a fin  
 Betwixt the cressy islets white in  
 flower;  
 So, scared but at the motion of the  
 man,  
 Fled all the boon companions of the  
 earl,  
 And left him lying in the public way;  
 So vanish friendships only made in  
 wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled  
 Geraint, <sup>480</sup>  
 Who saw the chargers of the two  
 that fell  
 Start from their fallen lords and wildly  
 fly,  
 Mixt with the flyers. 'Horse and  
 man,' he said,  
 'All of one mind and all right-honest  
 friends!  
 Not a hoof left! and I methinks till  
 now  
 Was honest—paid with horses and  
 with arms;  
 I cannot steal or plunder, no, nor beg.  
 And so what say ye, shall we strip  
 him there,  
 Your lover? has your palfrey heart  
 enough  
 To bear his armor? shall we fast or  
 dine?  
 No?—then do thou, being right hon-  
 est, pray  
 That we may meet the horsemen of  
 Earl Doorm;  
 I too would still be honest.' Thus he  
 said;  
 And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,  
 And answering not one word, she led  
 the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful  
 loss  
 Falls in a far land and he knows it  
 not,  
 But coming back he learns it, and the  
 loss  
 So pains him that he sickens nigh to  
 death;

So fared it with Geraint, who, being  
 prick'd  
 In combat with the follower of Li-  
 mours, <sup>500</sup>  
 Bled underneath his armor secretly,  
 And so rode on, nor told his gentle  
 wife  
 What ail'd him, hardly knowing it  
 himself,  
 Till his eye darken'd and his helmet  
 wagg'd;  
 And at a sudden swerving of the road,  
 Tho' happily down on a bank of  
 grass,  
 The prince, without a word, from his  
 horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his  
 fall,  
 Suddenly came, and at his side all  
 pale <sup>510</sup>  
 Dismounting loosed the fastenings of  
 his arms,  
 Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue  
 eye  
 Moisten, till she had lighted on his  
 wound,  
 And tearing off her veil of faded silk  
 Had bared her forehead to the blister-  
 ing sun,  
 And swathed the hurt that drain'd her  
 dear lord's life.  
 Then, after all was done that hand  
 could do,  
 She rested, and her desolation came  
 Upon her, and she wept beside the  
 way.

And many past, but none regarded  
 her, <sup>520</sup>  
 For in that realm of lawless turbu-  
 lence  
 A woman weeping for her murder'd  
 mate  
 Was cared as much for as a summer  
 shower.  
 One took him for a victim of Earl  
 Doorm,  
 Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on  
 him.  
 Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,  
 Rode on a mission to the bandit earl;  
 Half whistling and half singing a  
 coarse song,  
 He drove the dust against her veilless  
 eyes.

Another, flying from the wrath of  
Doorm<sup>530</sup>  
Before an ever-fancied arrow, made  
The long way smoke beneath him in  
his fear;  
At which her palfrey whinnying lifted  
heel,  
And scour'd into the coppices and was  
lost,  
While the great charger stood, grieved  
like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge  
Earl Doorm,  
Broad-faced with under-fringe of rus-  
set beard,  
Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of  
prey,  
Came riding with a hundred lances  
up;  
But ere he came, like one that hails a  
ship,<sup>540</sup>  
Cried out with a big voice, 'What, is  
he dead?'  
'No, no, not dead!' she answer'd in  
all haste.  
'Would some of your kind people  
take him up,  
And bear him hence out of this cruel  
sun?  
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not  
dead.'

Then said Earl Doorm: 'Well, if  
he be not dead,  
Why wail ye for him thus? ye seem  
a child.  
And be he dead, I count you for a  
fool;  
Your wailing will not quicken him:  
dead or not,  
Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.  
Yet, since the face *is* comely — some  
of you,<sup>551</sup>  
Here, take him up, and bear him to  
our hall.  
An if he live, we will have him of our  
band;  
And if he die, why earth has earth  
enough  
To hide him. See ye take the charger  
too,  
A noble one.'

He spake and past away,  
But left two brawny spearmen, who  
advanced,

Each growling like a dog, when his  
good bone  
Seems to be pluck'd at by the village  
boys  
Who love to vex him eating, and he  
fears<sup>560</sup>  
To lose his bone, and lays his foot  
upon it,  
Gnawing and growling; so the ruffians  
growl'd,  
Fearing to lose, and all for a dead  
man,  
Their chance of booty from the morn-  
ing's raid,  
Yet raised and laid him on a litte-  
bier,  
Such as they brought upon their  
forays out  
For those that might be wounded;  
laid him on it  
All in the hollow of his shield, and  
took  
And bore him to the naked hall of  
Doorm —  
His gentle charger following him un-  
led —<sup>570</sup>  
And cast him and the bier in which  
he lay  
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,  
And then departed, hot in haste to  
join  
Their luckier mates, but growling as  
before,  
And cursing their lost time, and the  
dead man,  
And their own earl, and their own  
souls, and her.  
They might as well have blest her;  
she was deaf  
To blessing or to cursing save from  
one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her  
lord  
There in the naked hall, propping his  
head,<sup>580</sup>  
And chafing his pale hands, and call-  
ing to him,  
Till at the last he waken'd from his  
swoon,  
And found his own dear bride prop-  
ping his head,  
And chafing his faint hands, and call-  
ing to him;  
And felt the warm tears falling on his  
face.



And said to his own heart, 'She weeps  
for me;'  
And yet lay still, and feign'd himself  
as dead,  
That he might prove her to the utter-  
most,  
And say to his own heart, 'She weeps  
for me.'

But in the falling afternoon re-  
turn'd<sup>590</sup>  
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder  
to the hall.  
His lusty spearmen follow'd him with  
noise:  
Each hurling down a heap of things  
that rang  
Against the pavement, cast his lance  
aside,  
And doff'd his helm; and then there  
flutter'd in,  
Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated  
eyes,  
A tribe of women, dress'd in many  
hues,  
And mingled with the spearmen;  
and Earl Doorm  
Struck with a knife's haft hard against  
the board,  
And call'd for flesh and wine to feed  
his spears.<sup>600</sup>  
And men brought in whole hogs and  
quarter beeves,  
And all the hall was dim with steam  
of flesh.  
And none spake word, but all sat  
down at once,  
And ate with tumult in the naked  
hall,  
Feeding like horses when you hear  
them feed;  
Till Enid shrank far back into herself,  
To shun the wild ways of the lawless  
tribe.  
But when Earl Doorm had eaten all  
he would,  
He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and  
found  
A damsel drooping in a corner of it.  
Then he remember'd her and how she  
wept,<sup>611</sup>  
And out of her there came a power  
upon him;  
And rising on the sudden he said:  
'Eat!  
I never yet beheld a thing so pale.

God's curse, it makes me mad to see  
you weep.  
Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had  
your good man,  
For were I dead who is it would weep  
for me?  
Sweet lady, never since I first drew  
breath  
Have I beheld a lily like yourself.  
And so there lived some color in your  
cheek,<sup>620</sup>  
There is not one among my gentle-  
women  
Were fit to wear your slipper for a  
glove.  
But listen to me, and by me be  
ruled,  
And I will do the thing I have not  
done,  
For ye shall share my earldom with  
me, girl,  
And we will live like two birds in one  
nest,  
And I will fetch you forage from all  
fields,  
For I compel all creatures to my will.'

He spoke; the brawny spearman let  
his cheek  
Bulge with the unswallow'd piece,  
and turning stared;<sup>630</sup>  
While some, whose souls the old ser-  
pent long had drawn  
Down, as the worm draws in the  
wither'd leaf  
And makes it earth, hiss'd each at  
other's ear  
What shall not be recorded — women  
they,  
Women, or what had been those gra-  
cious things,  
But now desired the humbling of  
their best,  
Yea, would have help'd him to it;  
and all at once  
They hated her, who took no thought  
of them,  
But answer'd in low voice, her meek  
head yet  
Drooping, 'I pray you of your cour-  
tesy,<sup>640</sup>  
He being as he is, to let me be.'

She spake so low he hardly heard  
her speak,  
But like a mighty patron, satisfied

With what himself had done so graciously,  
Assumed that she had thank'd him,  
adding, 'Yea,  
Eat and be glad, for I account you  
mine.'

She answer'd meekly, 'How should  
I be glad  
Henceforth in all the world at any-  
thing,  
Until my lord arise and look upon  
me?'

Here the huge earl cried out upon  
her talk, <sup>650</sup>  
As all but empty heart and weariness  
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized  
on her,  
And bare her by main violence to the  
board,  
And thrust the dish before her, cry-  
ing, 'Eat.'

'No, no,' said Enid, vext, 'I will  
not eat  
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,  
And eat with me.' 'Drink, then,' he  
answer'd. 'Here!'—  
And fill'd a horn with wine and held  
it to her,—  
'Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with  
fight or hot,  
God's curse, with anger—often I my-  
self, <sup>660</sup>  
Before I well have drunken, scarce  
can eat;  
Drink therefore, and the wine will  
change your will.'

'Not so,' she cried, 'by Heaven, I  
will not drink  
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do  
it,  
And drink with me; and if he rise no  
more,  
I will not look at wine until I die.'

At this he turn'd all red and paced  
his hall,  
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper  
lip,  
And coming up close to her, said at  
last:  
'Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies,

Take warning; yonder man is surely  
dead, <sup>671</sup>  
And I compel all creatures to my will.  
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore  
wail for one  
Who put your beauty to this flout  
and scorn  
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,  
Beholding how ye butt against my  
wish,  
That I forbear you thus; cross me no  
more.  
At least put off to please me this poor  
gown,  
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's  
weed.  
I love that beauty should go beauti-  
fully; <sup>680</sup>  
For see ye not my gentlewomen here,  
How gay, how suited to the house of  
one  
Who loves that beauty should go  
beautifully?  
Rise therefore; robe yourself in this;  
obey.'

He spoke, and one among his gen-  
tlewomen  
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign  
loom,  
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely  
blue  
Play'd into green, and thicker down  
the front  
With jewels than the sward with  
drops of dew,  
When all night long a cloud clings to  
the hill, <sup>690</sup>  
And with the dawn ascending lets the  
day  
Strike where it clung; so thickly  
shone the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be  
moved  
Than hardest tyrants in their day of  
power,  
With lifelong injuries burning una-  
venged,  
And now their hour has come; and  
Enid said:

'In this poor gown my dear lord  
found me first,  
And loved me serving in my father's  
hall;

In this poor gown I rode with him to court,  
 And there the Queen array'd me like the sun;  
 In this poor gown he bade me clothe myself,  
 When now we rode upon this fatal quest  
 Of honor, where no honor can be gain'd;  
 And this poor gown I will not cast aside  
 Until himself arise a living man,  
 And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough;  
 Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be.  
 I never loved, can never love but him.  
 Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,  
 He being as he is, to let me be.' 710

Then strode the brute earl up and down his hall,  
 And took his russet beard between his teeth;  
 Last, coming up quite close, and in his mood  
 Crying, 'I count it of no more avail,  
 Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with you;  
 Take my salute,' unknighly with flat hand,  
 However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,  
 And since she thought, 'He had not dared to do it,  
 Except he surely knew my lord was dead,'  
 Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,  
 As of a wild thing taken in the trap,  
 Which sees the trapper coming thro' the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his sword, —  
 It lay beside him in the hollow shield, —  
 Made but a single bound, and with a sweep of it  
 Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a ball  
 The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor.

So died Earl Doorm by him he counted dead.  
 And all the men and women in the hall  
 Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and fled  
 Yelling as from a spectre, and the two  
 Were left alone together, and he said:

'Enid, I have used you worse than that dead man,  
 Done you more wrong; we both have undergone  
 That trouble which has left me thrice your own.  
 Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.  
 And here I lay this penance on myself,  
 Not, tho' mine own ears heard you yesternorn —  
 You thought me sleeping, but I heard you say,  
 I heard you say, that you were no true wife,  
 I swear I will not ask your meaning in it.  
 I do believe yourself against yourself,  
 And will henceforward rather die than doubt.'

And Enid could not say one tender word,  
 She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart.  
 She only pray'd him, 'Fly, they will return  
 And slay you; fly, your charger is without,  
 My palfrey lost.' 'Then, Enid, shall you ride  
 Behind me.' 'Yea,' said Enid, 'let us go.'  
 And moving out they found the stately horse,  
 Who now no more a vassal to the thief,  
 But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,  
 Neigh'd with all gladness as they came, and stoop'd  
 With a low whinny toward the pair;  
 and she  
 Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,  
 Glad also; then Geraint upon the horse  
 Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his foot



'He turn'd his face  
And kiss'd her climbing'

She set her own and climb'd; he  
turn'd his face  
And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast  
her arms 760  
About him, and at once they rode  
away.

And never yet, since high in Para-  
dise  
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,  
Same purer pleasure unto mortal kind

Than lived thro' her who in that peril  
ous hour  
Put hand to hand beneath her hus-  
band's heart,  
And felt him hers again. She did not  
weep,  
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy  
mist  
Like that which kept the heart of  
Eden green  
Before the useful trouble of the rain.

Yet not so misty were her meek blue  
 eyes <sup>771</sup>  
 As not to see before them on the  
 path,  
 Right in the gateway of the bandit  
 hold,  
 A knight of Arthur's court, who laid  
 his lance  
 In rest and made as if to fall upon him.  
 Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of  
 blood,  
 She, with her mind all full of what  
 had chanced,  
 Shriek'd to the stranger, 'Slay not a  
 dead man!'  
 'The voice of Enid,' said the knight;  
 but she,  
 Beholding it was Edyrn, son of Nudd,  
 Was moved so much the more, and  
 shriek'd again, <sup>781</sup>  
 'O cousin, slay not him who gave you  
 life.'  
 And Edyrn moving frankly forward  
 spake:  
 'My lord Geraint, I greet you with all  
 love;  
 I took you for a bandit knight of  
 Doorm;  
 And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon  
 him,  
 Who love you, prince, with something  
 of the love  
 Wherewith we love the Heaven that  
 chastens us.  
 For once, when I was up so high in  
 pride  
 That I was halfway down the slope  
 to hell, <sup>790</sup>  
 By overthrowing me you threw me  
 higher.  
 Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table  
 Round,  
 And since I knew this earl when I  
 myself  
 Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,  
 I come the mouthpiece of our King to  
 Doorm —  
 The King is close behind me — bidding  
 him  
 Disband himself, and scatter all his  
 powers,  
 Submit, and hear the judgment of the  
 King.'  
 'He hears the judgment of the King  
 of kings.'

Cried the wan prince; 'and lo, the  
 powers of Doorm <sup>800</sup>  
 Are scatter'd!' and he pointed to the  
 field,  
 Where, huddled here and there on  
 mound and knoll,  
 Were men and women staring and  
 aghast,  
 While some yet fled; and then he  
 plainlier told  
 How the huge earl lay slain within his  
 hall.  
 But when the knight besought him,  
 'Follow me,  
 Prince, to the camp, and in the King's  
 own ear  
 Speak what has chanced; ye surely  
 have endured  
 Strange chances here alone;' that  
 other flush'd,  
 And hung his head, and halted in  
 reply, <sup>810</sup>  
 Fearing the mild face of the blameless  
 King,  
 And after madness acted question  
 ask'd;  
 Till Edyrn crying, 'If ye will not go  
 To Arthur, then will Arthur come to  
 you,'  
 'Enough,' he said, 'I follow,' and  
 they went.  
 But Enid in their going had two fears,  
 One from the bandit scatter'd in the  
 field,  
 And one from Edyrn. Every now  
 and then,  
 When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her  
 side,  
 She shrank a little. In a hollow land,  
 From which old fires have broken,  
 men may fear <sup>821</sup>  
 Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving,  
 said:  
 'Fair and dear cousin, you that  
 most had cause  
 To fear me, fear no longer, I am  
 changed.  
 Yourself were first the blameless cause  
 to make  
 My nature's prideful sparkle in the  
 blood  
 Break into furious flame; being re-  
 pulsed  
 By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and  
 wrought

Until I overturn'd him ; then set up —  
With one main purpose ever at my  
heart — <sup>830</sup>

My haughty jousts, and took a para-  
mour ;

Did her mock-honor as the fairest fair,  
And, toppling over all antagonism,  
So wax'd in pride that I believed my-  
self

Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh  
mad ;

And, but for my main purpose in these  
jousts,

I should have slain your father, seized  
yourself.

I lived in hope that sometime you  
would come

To these my lists with him whom best  
you loved,

And there, poor cousin, with your  
meek blue eyes, <sup>840</sup>

The truest eyes that ever answer'd  
heaven,

Behold me overturn and trample on  
him.

Then, had you cried, or knelt, or  
pray'd to me,

I should not less have kill'd him. And  
you came, —

But once you came, — and with your  
own true eyes

Beheld the man you loved — I speak  
as one

Speaks of a service done him — over-  
throw

My proud self, and my purpose three  
years old,

And set his foot upon me, and give  
me life.

There was I broken down, there was  
I saved ; <sup>850</sup>

Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating  
the life

He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.  
And all the penance the Queen laid  
upon me

Was but to rest awhile within her  
court ;

Where first as sullen as a beast new-  
caged,

And waiting to be treated like a wolf,  
Because I knew my deeds were known,

I found,  
Instead of scornful pity or pure

scorn,  
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,

Manners so kind, yet stately, such a  
grace <sup>860</sup>

Of tenderest courtesy, that I began  
To glance behind me at my former

life,  
And find that it had been the wolf's  
indeed.

And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high  
saint,

Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,  
Subdued me somewhat to that gentle

ness  
Which, when it weds with manhood,  
makes a man.

And you were often there about the  
Queen,

But saw me not, or mark'd not if you  
saw ;

Nor did I care or dare to speak with  
you, <sup>870</sup>

But kept myself aloof till I was  
changed ;

And fear not, cousin, I am changed  
indeed.'

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,  
Like simple noble natures, credulous

Of what they long for, good in friend  
or foe,

There most in those who most have  
done them ill.

And when they reach'd the camp the  
King himself

Advanced to greet them, and behold-  
ing her

Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a  
word,

But went apart with Edyrn, whom he  
held <sup>880</sup>

In converse for a little, and return'd,  
And, gravely smiling, lifted her from

horse,  
And kiss'd her with all pureness, bro-  
ther-like,

And show'd an empty tent allotted her,  
And glancing for a minute, till he saw  
her

Pass into it, turn'd to the prince, and  
said :

'Prince, when of late ye pray'd me  
for my leave

To move to your own land and there  
defend

Your marches, I was prick'd with  
some reproof,

As one that let foul wrong stagnate  
 and be, <sup>890</sup>  
 By having look'd too much thro' alien  
 eyes,  
 And wrought too long with delegated  
 hands,  
 Not used mine own; but now behold  
 me come  
 To cleanse this common sewer of all  
 my realm,  
 With Edyrn and with others. Have  
 ye look'd  
 At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly  
 changed?  
 This work of his is great and wonder-  
 ful.  
 His very face with change of heart is  
 changed.  
 The world will not believe a man re-  
 pents;  
 And this wise world of ours is mainly  
 right. <sup>900</sup>  
 Full seldom doth a man repent, or use  
 Both grace and will to pick the vicious  
 quitch  
 Of blood and custom wholly out of  
 him,  
 And make all clean, and plant himself  
 afresh,  
 Edyrn has done it, weeding all his  
 heart  
 As I will weed this land before I go.  
 I, therefore, made him of our Table  
 Round,  
 Not rashly, but have proved him  
 every way  
 One of our noblest, our most valorous,  
 Sanest and most obedient; and indeed  
 This work of Edyrn, wrought upon  
 himself <sup>911</sup>  
 After a life of violence, seems to me  
 A thousand-fold more great and wonder-  
 ful  
 Than if some knight of mine, risking  
 his life,  
 My subject with my subjects under  
 him,  
 Should make an onslaught single on a  
 realm  
 Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by  
 one,  
 And were himself nigh wounded to  
 the death.  
 So spake the King; low bow'd the  
 prince, and felt

His work was neither great nor won-  
 derful, <sup>920</sup>  
 And past to Enid's tent; and thither  
 came  
 The King's own leech to look into his  
 hurt;  
 And Enid tended on him there; and  
 there  
 Her constant motion round him, and  
 the breath  
 Of her sweet tendance hovering over  
 him,  
 Fill'd all the genial courses of his  
 blood  
 With deeper and with ever deeper  
 love,  
 As the Southwest that blowing Bala  
 lake  
 Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the  
 days.  
 But while Geraint lay healing of  
 his hurt, <sup>930</sup>  
 The blameless King went forth and  
 cast his eyes  
 On each of all whom Uther left in  
 charge  
 Long since, to guard the justice of the  
 King.  
 He look'd and found them wanting;  
 and as now  
 Men weed the White Horse on the  
 Berkshire hills,  
 To keep him bright and clean as here-  
 tofore,  
 He rooted out the slothful officer  
 Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd  
 at wrong,  
 And in their chairs set up a stronger  
 race  
 With hearts and hands, and sent a  
 thousand men <sup>940</sup>  
 To till the wastes, and moving every-  
 where  
 Clear'd the dark places and let in the  
 law,  
 And broke the bandit holds and  
 cleansed the land.  
 Then, when Geraint was whole  
 again, they past  
 With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.  
 There the great Queen once more em-  
 braced her friend,  
 And clothed her in apparel like the  
 day.

And tho' Geraint could never take  
 again  
 That comfort from their converse  
 which he took  
 Before the Queen's fair name was  
 breathed upon, <sup>950</sup>  
 He rested well content that all was  
 well.  
 Thence after tarrying for a space they  
 rode,  
 And fifty knights rode with them to  
 the shores  
 Of Severn, and they past to their own  
 land.  
 And there he kept the justice of the  
 King  
 So vigorously yet mildly that all  
 hearts  
 Applauded, and the spiteful whisper  
 died ;  
 And being ever foremost in the chase,  
 And victor at the tilt and tournament,  
 They call'd him the great prince and  
 man of men. <sup>960</sup>  
 But Enid, whom her ladies loved to  
 call  
 Enid the Fair, a grateful people  
 named  
 Enid the Good; and in their halls  
 arose  
 The cry of children, Enids and Ge-  
 raints  
 Of times to be ; nor did he doubt her  
 more,  
 But rested in her fealty till he crown'd  
 A happy life with a fair death, and  
 fell  
 Against the heathen of the Northern  
 Sea  
 In battle, fighting for the blameless  
 King.

## BALIN AND BALAN

PELLAM the king, who held and lost  
 with Lot  
 In that first war, and had his realm  
 restored  
 But render'd tributary, fail'd of late  
 To send his tribute ; wherefore Arthur  
 call'd  
 His treasurer, one of many years, and  
 spake :  
 ' Go thou with him and him and bring  
 it to us,

Lest we should set one truer on his  
 throne.

Man's word is God in man.'

His baron said :  
 ' We go, but harken : there be two  
 strange knights  
 Who sit near Camelot at a fountain  
 side <sup>10</sup>  
 A mile beneath the forest, challen-  
 ging  
 And overthrowing every knight who  
 comes.  
 Wilt thou I undertake them as we  
 pass,  
 And send them to thee ?'

Arthur laugh'd upon him :  
 ' Old friend, too old to be so young,  
 depart,  
 Delay not thou for aught, but let them  
 sit,  
 Until they find a lustier than them-  
 selves.'

So these departed. Early, one fai-  
 dawn,  
 The light-wing'd spirit of his youth  
 return'd  
 On Arthur's heart ; he arm'd himself  
 and went, <sup>20</sup>  
 So coming to the fountain-side be-  
 held  
 Balin and Balan sitting statue-like,  
 Brethren, to right and left the spring,  
 that down,  
 From underneath a plume of lady-  
 fern,  
 Sang, and the sand danced at the bot-  
 tom of it.  
 And on the right of Balin Balin's  
 horse  
 Was fast beside an alder, on the  
 left  
 Of Balan Balan's near a poplar-tree.  
 ' Fair sirs,' said Arthur, ' wherefore  
 sit ye here ?'  
 Balin and Balan answer'd : ' For the  
 sake <sup>30</sup>  
 Of glory ; we be mightier men than  
 all  
 In Arthur's court ; that also have we  
 proved,  
 For whatsoever knight against us  
 came  
 Or I or he have easily overthrown.'



'I too,' said Arthur, 'am of Arthur's hall,  
But rather proven in his Paynim wars  
Than famous jousts; but see, or  
proven or not,  
Whether me likewise ye can over-  
throw.'  
And Arthur lightly smote the brethren  
down,  
And lightly so return'd, and no man  
knew. 40

Then Balin rose, and Balan, and be-  
side  
The carolling water set themselves  
again,  
And spake no word until the shadow  
turn'd;  
When from the fringe of coppice  
round them burst  
A spangled pursuivant, and crying,  
'Sirs,  
Rise, follow! ye be sent for by the  
King,'  
They follow'd; whom when Arthur  
seeing ask'd,  
'Tell me your names; why sat ye by  
the well?'  
Balin the stillness of a minute broke  
Saying, 'An unmelodious name to  
thee, 50  
Balin, "the Savage" — that addition  
thine —  
My brother and my better, this man  
here,  
Balan. I smote upon the naked skull  
A thrall of thine in open hall; my  
hand  
Was gauntleted, half slew him, for I  
heard  
He had spoken evil of me; thy just  
wrath  
Sent me a three-years' exile from  
thine eyes.  
I have not lived my life delight-  
somely;  
For I that did that violence to thy  
thrall,  
Had often wrought some fury on my-  
self, 60  
Saving for Balan. Those three king-  
less years  
Have past — were wormwood-bitter  
to me. King,  
Methought that if we sat beside the  
well,

And hurl'd to ground what knight so-  
ever spur'd  
Against us, thou would'st take me  
gladlier back,  
And make, as ten times worthier to be  
thine  
Than twenty Balins, Balan knight. I  
have said.  
Not so — not all. A man of thine to-  
day  
Abash'd us both, and brake my boast.  
'Thy will?'  
Said Arthur: 'Thou hast ever spoken  
truth; 70  
Thy too fierce manhood would not let  
thee lie.  
Rise, my true knight. As children  
learn, be thou  
Wiser for falling! walk with me, and  
move  
To music with thine Order and the  
King.  
Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren,  
stands  
Vacant, but thou retake it, mine  
again!'

Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd  
hall,  
The lost one found was greeted as in  
heaven  
With joy that blazed itself in wood-  
land wealth  
Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of  
flowers, 80  
Along the walls and down the board;  
they sat,  
And cup clash'd cup; they drank,  
and some one sang,  
Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome,  
whereupon  
Their common shout in chorus, mount  
ing, made  
Those banners of twelve battles over-  
head  
Stir as they stirr'd of old, when Ar-  
thur's host  
Proclaim'd him victor and the day  
was won.

Then Balan added to their Order  
lived  
A wealthier life than heretofore with  
these  
And Balin, till their embassy re-  
turn'd. 90

'Sir King,' they brought report,  
 'we hardly found,  
 So bush'd about it is with gloom, the  
 hall  
 Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellam,  
 once  
 A Christless foe of thine as ever dash'd  
 Horse against horse; but seeing that  
 thy realm  
 Hath prosper'd in the name of Christ,  
 the King  
 Took, as in rival heat, to holy things,  
 And finds himself descended from the  
 Saint  
 Arimathæan Joseph, him who first  
 Brought the great faith to Britain over  
 seas. <sup>100</sup>  
 He boasts his life as purer than thine  
 own;  
 Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse  
 a-beat;  
 Hath push'd aside his faithful wife,  
 nor lets  
 Or dame or damsel enter at his gates  
 Lest he should be polluted. This gray  
 king  
 Show'd us a shrine wherein were won-  
 ders—yea,  
 Rich arks with priceless bones of mar-  
 tyrdom,  
 Thorns of the crown and shivers of  
 the cross,  
 And therewithal,—for thus he told  
 us,—brought  
 By holy Joseph hither, that same spear  
 Wherewith the Roman pierced the side  
 of Christ. <sup>111</sup>  
 He much amazed us; after, when we  
 sought  
 The tribute, answer'd, "I have quite  
 foregone  
 All matters of this world. Garlon,  
 mine heir,  
 Of him demand it," which this Garlon  
 gave  
 With much ado, railing at thine and  
 thee.  
 'But when we left, in those deep  
 woods we found  
 A knight of thine spear-stricken from  
 behind,  
 Dead, whom we buried; more than  
 one of us  
 Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman  
 there <sup>120</sup>

Reported of some demon in the woods  
 Was once a man, who, driven by evil  
 tongues  
 From all his fellows, lived alone, and  
 came  
 To learn black magic, and to hate his  
 kind  
 With such a hate that when he died  
 his soul  
 Became a fiend, which, as the man in  
 life  
 Was wounded by blind tongues he saw  
 not whence,  
 Strikes from behind. This woodman  
 show'd the cave  
 From which he sallies and wherein he  
 dwelt.  
 We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no  
 more.' <sup>130</sup>

Then Arthur, 'Let who goes before  
 me see  
 He do not fall behind me. Foully slain  
 And villainously! who will hunt for  
 me  
 This demon of the woods?' Said  
 Balan, 'I!'  
 So claim'd the quest and rode away,  
 but first,  
 Embracing Balin: 'Good my brother,  
 hear!  
 Let not thy moods prevail when I am  
 gone  
 Who used to lay them! hold them  
 outer fiends,  
 Who leap at thee to tear thee; shake  
 them aside,  
 Dreams ruling when wit sleeps! yea,  
 but to dream <sup>140</sup>  
 That any of these would wrong thee  
 wrongs thyself.  
 Witness their flowery welcome. Bound  
 are they  
 To speak no evil. Truly, save for  
 fears,  
 My fears for thee, so rich a fellowship  
 Would make me wholly blest; thou  
 one of them,  
 Be one indeed. Consider them, and all  
 Their bearing in their common bond  
 of love,  
 No more of hatred than in heaven itself,  
 No more of jealousy than in Paradise.'  
 So Balan warn'd, and went; Balin  
 remain'd, <sup>150</sup>

Who — for but three brief moons had  
glanced away  
From being knighted till he smote the  
thrall,  
And faded from the presence into years  
Of exile — now would strictlier set  
himself  
To learn what Arthur meant by cour-  
tesy,  
Manhood, and knighthood; wherefore  
hover'd round  
Lancelot, but when he mark'd his high  
sweet smile  
In passing, and a transitory word  
Make knight or churl or child or  
damsel seem  
From being smiled at happier in them-  
selves — <sup>160</sup>  
Sigh'd, as a boy, lame-born beneath a  
height  
That glooms his valley, sighs to see  
the peak  
Sun-flush'd or touch at night the north-  
ern star;  
For one from out his village lately  
climb'd  
And brought report of azure lands and  
fair,  
Far seen to left and right; and he  
himself  
Hath hardly scaled with help a hun-  
dred feet  
Up from the base. So Balin, marvel-  
ling oft  
How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd  
to move,  
Groan'd, and at times would mutter:  
'These be gifts, <sup>170</sup>  
Born with the blood, not learnable,  
divine,  
Beyond my reach. Well had I  
foughten — well —  
In those fierce wars, struck hard —  
and had I crown'd  
With my slain self the heaps of whom  
I slew —  
So — better! — But this worship of the  
Queen,  
That honor too wherein she holds him  
— this,  
This was the sunshine that hath given  
the man  
A growth, a name that branches o'er  
the rest,  
And strength against all odds, and  
what the King

So prizes — overprizes — gentleness.  
Her likewise would I worship an I  
might. <sup>181</sup>  
I never can be close with her, as he  
That brought her hither. Shall I pray  
the King  
To let me bear some token of his Queen  
Whereon to gaze, remembering her —  
forget  
My heats and violences? live afresh?  
What if the Queen disdain'd to grant  
it! nay,  
Being so stately-gentle, would she  
make  
My darkness blackness? and with how  
sweet grace  
She greeted my return! Bold will I  
be — <sup>190</sup>  
Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,  
In lieu of this rough beast upon my  
shield,  
Langued gules, and tooth'd with grin-  
ning savagery.'

And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought  
him, said,  
'What wilt thou bear?' Balin was  
bold, and ask'd  
To bear her own crown-royal upon  
shield,  
Whereat she smiled and turn'd her to  
the King,  
Who answer'd: 'Thou shalt put the  
crown to use.  
The crown is but the shadow of the  
king,  
And this a shadow's shadow, let him  
have it, <sup>200</sup>  
So this will help him of his violences!'  
'No shadow,' said Sir Balin, 'O my  
Queen,  
But light to me! no shadow, O my  
King,  
But golden earnest of a gentler life!'

So Balin bare the crown, and all the  
knights  
Approved him, and the Queen; and all  
the world  
Made music, and he felt his being  
move  
In music with his Order and the King.

The nightingale, full-toned in mid-  
dle May,  
Hath ever and anon a note so thin <sup>210</sup>

It seems another voice in other groves ;  
 Thus, after some quick burst of sudden wrath,  
 The music in him seem'd to change and grow  
 Faint and far-off.

And once he saw the thrall  
 His passion half had gauntleted to death,  
 That causer of his banishment and shame,  
 Smile at him, as he deem'd, presumptuously.  
 His arm half rose to strike again, but fell ;  
 The memory of that cognizance on shield  
 Weighted it down, but in himself he moan'd : 220

'Too high this mount of Camelot for me ;  
 These high-set courtesies are not for me.  
 Shall I not rather prove the worse for these ?  
 Fierier and stormier from restraining, break  
 Into some madness even before the Queen ?'

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain home,  
 And glancing on the window, when the gloom  
 Of twilight deepens round it, seems a flame  
 That rages in the woodland far below,  
 So when his moods were darken'd, court and king 230  
 And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's hall  
 Shadow'd an angry distance ; yet he strove  
 To learn the graces of their Table, fought  
 Hard with himself, and seem'd at length in peace.

Then chanced, one morning, that Sir Balin sat  
 Close-bower'd in that garden nigh the hall.  
 A walk of roses ran from door to door,  
 A walk of lilies crost it to the bower ;

And down that range of roses the great Queen  
 Came with slow steps, the morning on her face ; 240  
 And all in shadow from the counter door  
 Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at once,  
 As if he saw not, glanced aside, and paced  
 The long white walk of lilies toward the bower.  
 Follow'd the Queen ; Sir Balin heard her ' Prince,  
 Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen  
 As pass without good morrow to thy Queen ?'  
 To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes on earth,  
 'Fain would I still be loyal to the Queen.'  
 'Yea, so,' she said ; 'but so to pass me by — 250  
 So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,  
 Whom all men rate the king of courtesy.  
 Let be ; ye stand, fair lord, as in a dream.'

Then Lancelot with his hand among the flowers :  
 'Yea — for a dream. Last night methought I saw  
 That maiden Saint who stands with lily in hand  
 In yonder shrine. All round her prest the dark,  
 And all the light upon her silver face  
 Flow'd from the spiritual lily that she held.  
 Lo ! these her emblems drew mine eyes — away ; 260  
 For see, how perfect-pure ! As light a flush  
 As hardly tints the blossom of the quince  
 Would mar their charm of stainless maidenhood.'

'Sweeter to me,' she said, 'this garden rose  
 Deep-hued and many-folded ! sweeter still  
 The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom of May !

Prince, we have ridden before among  
the flowers  
In those fair days — not all as cool as  
these,  
Tho' season-earlier. Art thou sad? or  
sick?  
Our noble King will send thee his own  
leech — <sup>270</sup>  
Sick? or for any matter anger'd at  
me?

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes;  
they dwelt  
Deep-tranced on hers, and could not  
fall. Her hue  
Changed at his gaze; so turning side  
by side  
They past, and Balin started from his  
bower.

'Queen? subject? but I see not  
what I see.  
Damsel and lover? hear not what I  
hear.  
My father hath begotten me in his  
wrath.  
I suffer from the things before me,  
know,  
Learn nothing; am not worthy to be  
knight — <sup>280</sup>  
A churl, a clown!' and in him gloom  
on gloom  
Deepen'd; he sharply caught his  
lance and shield,  
Nor stay'd to crave permission of the  
King,  
But mad for strange adventure, dash'd  
away.

He took the selfsame track as Balin,  
saw  
The fountain where they sat together,  
sigh'd,  
'Was I not better there with him?'  
and rode  
The skyless woods, but under open  
blue  
Came on the hoar-head woodman at a  
bough  
Wearily hewing. 'Churl, thine axe!'  
he cried, <sup>290</sup>  
Descended, and disjointed it at a blow;  
To whom the woodman utter'd wonder-  
ingly,  
'Lord, thou couldst lay the devil of  
these woods

If arm of flesh could lay him!' Balin  
cried,  
'Him, or the viler devil who plays his  
part;  
To lay that devil would lay the devil  
in me.'  
'Nay,' said the churl, 'our devil is a  
truth,  
I saw the flash of him but yester-even.  
And some *do* say that our Sir Garlon  
too  
Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride  
unseen. <sup>300</sup>  
Look to the cave.' But Balin answer'd  
him,  
'Old fabler, these be fancies of the  
churl;  
Look to thy woodcraft,' and so leaving  
him,  
Now with slack rein and careless of  
himself,  
Now with dug spur and raving at him-  
self,  
Now with droopt brow down the long  
glades he rode;  
So mark'd not on his right a cavern-  
chasm  
Yawn over darkness, where, nor far  
within,  
The whole day died, but, dying,  
gleam'd on rocks  
Roof-pendent, sharp; and others from  
the floor, <sup>310</sup>  
Tusklike, arising, made that mouth of  
night  
Whereout the demon issued up from  
hell.  
He mark'd not this, but, blind and  
deaf to all  
Save that chain'd rage which ever  
yelp'd within,  
Past eastward from the falling sun.  
At once  
He felt the hollow-beaten mosses thud  
And tremble, and then the shadow of  
a spear,  
Shot from behind him, ran along the  
ground.  
Sideways he started from the path,  
and saw,  
With pointed lance as if to pierce, a  
shape, <sup>320</sup>  
A light of armor by him flash, and  
pass  
And vanish in the woods; and follow'd  
this,

But all so blind in rage that unawares  
 He burst his lance against a forest  
     bough,  
 Dishorsed himself, and rose again, and  
     fled  
 Far, till the castle of a king, the hall  
 Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly  
     draped  
 With streaming grass, appear'd, low-  
     built but strong;  
 The ruinous donjon as a knoll of moss,  
 The battlement overtopt with ivy-  
     tods, <sup>330</sup>  
 A home of bats, in every tower an owl.

Then spake the men of Pellam cry-  
     ing, 'Lord,  
 Why wear ye this crown-royal upon  
     shield?'  
 Said Balin, 'For the fairest and the  
     best  
 Of ladies living gave me this to bear.'  
 So stall'd his horse, and strode across  
     the court,  
 But found the greetings both of knight  
     and king  
 Faint in the low dark hall of banquet.  
     Leaves  
 Laid their green faces flat against the  
     panes,  
 Sprays grated, and the canker'd  
     boughs without <sup>340</sup>  
 Whined in the wood; for all was  
     hush'd within,  
 Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise  
     ask'd,  
 'Why wear ye that crown-royal?'  
     Balin said,  
 'The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I,  
     and all,  
 As fairest, best, and purest, granted  
     me  
 To bear it!' Such a sound — for  
     Arthur's knights  
 Were hated strangers in the hall — as  
     makes  
 The white swan-mother, sitting, when  
     she hears  
 A strange knee rustle thro' her secret  
     reeds,  
 Made Garlon, hissing; then he sourly  
     smiled: <sup>350</sup>  
 'Fairest I grant her — I have seen;  
     but best,  
 Best, purest? *thou* from Arthur's hall.  
     and yet

So simple! hast thou eyes, or if, are  
     these

So far besotted that they fail to see  
 This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret  
     shame?

Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes.'

A goblet on the board by Balin,  
     boss'd

With holy Joseph's legend, on his  
     right

Stood, all of massiest bronze. One  
     side had sea

And ship and sail and angels blowing  
     on it; <sup>360</sup>

And one was rough with wattling, and  
     the walls

Of that low church he built at Glaston-  
     bury.

This Balin graspt, but while in act to  
     hurl,

Thro' memory of that token on the  
     shield

Relax'd his hold. 'I will be gentle,'  
     he thought,

'And passing gentle;' caught his  
     hand away,

Then fiercely to Sir Garlon: 'Eyes  
     have I

That saw to-day the shadow of a spear,  
 Shot from behind me, run along the  
     ground;

Eyes too that long have watch'd how  
     Lancelot draws <sup>370</sup>

From homage to the best and purest,  
     might,

Name, manhood, and a grace, but  
     scantly thine

Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst  
     endure

To mouth so huge a foulness — to thy  
     guest,

Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon talk!  
 Let be! no more!'

But not the less by night  
 The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his  
     rest,

Stung him in dreams. At length, and  
     dim thro' leaves

Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated,  
     and old boughs

Whined in the wood. He rose, de-  
     scended, met <sup>380</sup>

The scorner in the castle court, and  
     fain,

For hate and loathing, would have  
 past him by ;  
 But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking-  
 wise,  
 'What, wear ye still that same crown-  
 scandalous ?'  
 His countenance blacken'd, and his  
 forehead veins  
 Bloated and branch'd ; and tearing out  
 of sheath  
 The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery, 'Ha !  
 So thou be shadow, here I make thee  
 ghost,'  
 Hard upon helm smote him, and the  
 blade flew  
 Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the  
 stones. <sup>390</sup>  
 Then Garlon, reeling slowly back-  
 ward, fell,  
 And Balin by the banneret of his helm  
 Draggd him, and struck, but from  
 the castle a cry  
 Sounded across the court, and — men-  
 at-arms,  
 A score with pointed lances, making  
 at him —  
 He dash'd the pummel at the foremost  
 face,  
 Beneath a low door dipt, and made  
 his feet  
 Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till  
 he mark'd  
 The portal of King Pellam's chapel  
 wide  
 And inward to the wall ; he stept be-  
 hind ; <sup>400</sup>  
 Thence in a moment heard them pass  
 like wolves  
 Howling ; but while he stared about  
 the shrine,  
 In which he scarce could spy the  
 Christ for Saints,  
 Beheld before a golden altar lie  
 The longest lance his eyes had ever  
 seen,  
 Point-painted red ; and seizing there-  
 upon  
 Push'd thro' an open casement down,  
 lean'd on it,  
 Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth ;  
 Then hand at ear, and harkening from  
 what side  
 The blindfold rummage buried in the  
 walls <sup>410</sup>  
 Might echo, ran the counter path, and  
 found

His charger, mounted on him and  
 away.  
 An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to  
 the left,  
 One overhead ; and Pellam's feeble cry,  
 'Stay, stay him ! he defileth heavenly  
 things  
 With earthly uses !' made him quickly  
 dive  
 Beneath the boughs, and race thro'  
 many a mile  
 Of dense and open, till his goodly  
 horse,  
 Arising wearily at a fallen oak,  
 Stumbled headlong, and cast him face  
 to ground. <sup>420</sup>

Half-wroth he had not ended, but  
 all glad,  
 Knightlike, to find his charger yet un-  
 lamed,  
 Sir Balin drew the shield from off his  
 neck,  
 Stared at the priceless cognizance, and  
 thought,  
 'I have shamed thee so that now thou  
 shamest me,  
 Thee will I bear no more,' high on a  
 branch  
 Hung it, and turn'd aside into the  
 woods,  
 And there in gloom cast himself all  
 along,  
 Moaning, 'My violences, my vio-  
 lences !'

But now the wholesome music of  
 the wood <sup>430</sup>  
 Was dumb'd by one from out the hall  
 of Mark,  
 A damsel-errant, warbling, as she  
 rode  
 The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her  
 squire.

'The fire of heaven has kill'd the barren  
 cold,  
 And kindled all the plain and all the wold.  
 The new leaf ever pushes off the old.  
 The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

'Old priest, who mumble worship in  
 your quire —  
 Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world's  
 desire,  
 Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire ! <sup>440</sup>  
 The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.'

'The fire of heaven is on the dusty ways.  
The wayside blossoms open to the blaze.  
The whole wood-world is one full peal of  
praise.  
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

'The fire of heaven is lord of all things  
good,  
And starve not thou this fire within thy  
blood,  
But follow Vivien thro' the fiery flood !  
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell !'

Then turning to her squire, 'This  
fire of heaven, <sup>450</sup>  
This old sun-worship, boy, will rise  
again,  
And beat the Cross to earth, and break  
the King  
And all his Table.'

Then they reach'd a glade,  
Where under one long lunc of cloud-  
less air  
Before another wood, the royal crown  
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless  
elm  
Drew the vague glance of Vivien and  
her squire.  
Amazed were these; 'Lo there,' she  
cried — 'a crown —  
Borne by some high lord-prince of Ar-  
thur's hall,  
And there a horse! the rider? where  
is he? <sup>460</sup>  
See, yonder lies one dead within the  
wood.  
Not dead; he stirs! — but sleeping. I  
will speak.  
Hail, royal knight, we break on thy  
sweet rest,  
Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble  
deeds.  
But bounden art thou, if from Ar-  
thur's hall,  
To help the weak. Behold, I fly from  
shame,  
A lustful king, who sought to win my  
love  
Thro' evil ways. The knight with  
whom I rode  
Hath suffer'd misadventure, and my  
squire  
Hath in him small defence; but thou,  
Sir Prince, <sup>470</sup>  
Wilt surely guide me to the warrior  
King,

Arthur the blameless, pure as any  
maid.  
To get me shelter for my maidenhood.  
I charge thee by that crown upon thy  
shield,  
And by the great Queen's name, arise  
and hence.'

And Balin rose: 'Thither no more  
nor prince  
Nor knight am I, but one that hath  
defamed  
The cognizance she gave me. Here I  
dwell  
Savage among the savage woods, here  
die —  
Die — let the wolves' black maws en-  
sepulchre <sup>480</sup>  
Their brother beast, whose anger was  
his lord !  
O me, that such a name as Guinevere's,  
Which our high Lancelot hath so lifted  
up,  
And been thereby uplifted, should  
thro' me,  
My violence, and my villainy, come to  
shame !'

Thereat she suddenly laugh'd and  
shrill, anon  
Sigh'd all as suddenly. Said Balin to  
her:  
'Is this thy courtesy — to mock me,  
ha ?  
Hence, for I will not with thee.' Again  
she sigh'd:  
'Pardon, sweet lord! we maidens  
often laugh <sup>490</sup>  
When sick at heart, when rather we  
should weep.  
I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon  
thy rest,  
And now full loth am I to break thy  
dream,  
But thou art man, and canst abide a  
truth,  
Tho' bitter. Hither, boy — and mark  
me well.  
Dost thou remember at Caerleon  
once —  
A year ago — nay, then I love thee  
not —  
Ay, thou rememberest well — one  
summer dawn —  
By the great tower — Caerleon upon  
Usk —



Nay, truly we were hidden — this fair lord,  
 The flower of all their vestal knight-<sup>500</sup>  
 hood, knelt  
 In amorous homage — knelt — what  
 else? — O, ay,  
 Knelt, and drew down from out his  
 nightblack hair  
 And mumbled that white hand whose  
 ring'd caress  
 Had wander'd from her own King's  
 golden head,  
 And lost itself in darkness, till she  
 cried —  
 I thought the great tower would crash  
 down on both —  
 "Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me  
 on the lips,  
 Thou art my King." This lad, whose  
 lightest word  
 Is mere white truth in simple naked-  
 ness,<sup>510</sup>  
 Saw them embrace; he reddens, can-  
 not speak,  
 So bashful, he! but all the maiden  
 Saints,  
 The deathless mother-maidenhood of  
 heaven,  
 Cry out upon her. Up then, ride  
 with me!  
 Talk not of shame! thou canst not,  
 an thou wouldst,  
 Do these more shame than these have  
 done themselves.'

She lied with ease; but horror-  
 stricken he,  
 Remembering that dark bower at  
 Camelot,  
 Breathed in a dismal whisper, 'It is  
 truth.'

Sunnily she smiled: 'And even in  
 this lone wood,<sup>520</sup>  
 Sweet lord, ye do right well to whis-  
 per this.  
 Fools prate, and perish traitors.  
 Woods have tongues,  
 As walls have ears; but thou shalt  
 go with me,  
 And we will speak at first exceeding  
 low.  
 Meet is it the good King be not de-  
 ceived.  
 See now, I set thee high on vantage  
 ground,

From whence to watch the time, and  
 eagle-like  
 Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the  
 Queen.'

She ceased; his evil spirit upon  
 him leapt,  
 He ground his teeth together, sprang  
 with a yell,<sup>530</sup>  
 Tore from the branch and cast on  
 earth the shield,  
 Drove his mail'd heel athwart the  
 royal crown,  
 Stamp'd all into defacement, hurl'd it  
 from him  
 Among the forest weeds, and cursed  
 the tale,  
 The told-of, and the teller.

That weird yell,  
 Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or  
 beast,  
 Thrill'd thro' the woods; and Balan  
 lurking there —  
 His quest was unaccomplish'd — heard  
 and thought  
 'The scream of that wood-devil I  
 came to quell!'  
 Then nearing: 'Lo! he hath slain  
 some brother-knight,<sup>540</sup>  
 And tramples on the goodly shield to  
 show  
 His loathing of our Order and the  
 Queen.  
 My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil  
 or man,  
 Guard thou thine head.' Sir Balan  
 spake not a word,  
 But snatch'd a sudden buckler from  
 the squire,  
 And vaulted on his horse, and so they  
 crash'd  
 In onset, and King Pellam's holy spear,  
 Reputed to be red with sinless blood,  
 Redden'd at once with sinful, for the  
 point  
 Across the maiden shield of Balan  
 prick'd<sup>550</sup>  
 The hauberk to the flesh; and Balin's  
 horse  
 Was wearied to the death, and, when  
 they clash'd,  
 Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the  
 man  
 Inward, and either fell and swoon'd  
 away.

Then to her squire mutter'd the  
damsel: 'Fools!  
This fellow hath wrought some foul-  
ness with his Queen;  
Else never had he borne her crown,  
nor raved  
And thus foam'd over at a rival name.  
But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast  
broken shell,  
Art yet half-yolk, not even come to  
down —<sup>560</sup>  
Who never sawest Caerleon upon  
Usk —  
And yet hast often pleaded for my  
love —  
See what I see, be thou where I have  
been,  
Or else, Sir Chick — dismount and  
loose their casques;  
I fain would know what manner of  
men they be.'  
And when the squire had loosed them,  
'Goodly! — look!  
They might have cropt the myriad  
flower of May,  
And butt each other here, like brain-  
less bulls,  
Dead for one heifer!'

Then the gentle squire:  
'I hold them happy, so they died for  
love;<sup>570</sup>  
And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like  
your dog,  
I too could die, as now I live, for  
thee.'

'Live on, Sir Boy,' she cried; 'I  
better prize  
The living dog than the dead lion.  
Away!  
I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead.'  
Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen  
oak,  
And bounding forward, 'Leave them  
to the wolves.'

But when their foreheads felt the  
cooling air,  
Balin first woke, and seeing that true  
face,  
Familiar up from cradle-time, so wan,  
Crawl'd slowly with low moans to  
where he lay,<sup>581</sup>  
And on his dying brother cast him-  
self

Dying; and he lifted faint eyes; he  
felt  
One near him; all at once they found  
the world,  
Staring wild-wide; then with a child-  
like wail,  
And drawing down the dim disastrous  
brow  
That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it,  
moan'd, and spake:

'O Balin, Balin, I that fain had  
died  
To save thy life, have brought thee to  
thy death.  
Why had ye not the shield I knew?  
and why<sup>590</sup>  
Trampled ye thus on that which bare  
the crown?'

Then Balin told him brokenly and  
in gasps  
All that had chanced, and Balan  
moan'd again:

'Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's  
hall;  
This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded  
not.  
And one said, "Eat in peace! a liar  
is he,  
And hates thee for the tribute!"  
This good knight  
Told me that twice a wanton damsel  
came,  
And sought for Garlon at the castle-  
gates,  
Whom Pellam drove away with holy  
heat.<sup>600</sup>  
I well believe this damsel, and the  
one  
Who stood beside thee even now, the  
same.  
"She dwells among the woods," he  
said, "and meets  
And dallies with him in the Mouth of  
Hell."  
Foul are their lives, foul are their  
lips; they lied.  
Pure as our own true mother is our  
Queen.'

'O brother,' answer'd Balin, 'woe  
is me!  
My madness all thy life has been thy  
doom,

Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day ;  
 and now  
 The night has come. I scarce can  
 see thee now. <sup>610</sup>  
 Good night! for we shall never bid  
 again  
 Good morrow — Dark my doom was  
 here, and dark  
 It will be there. I see thee now no  
 more.  
 I would not mine again should darken  
 thine ;  
 Good night, true brother.'

Balan answer'd low,  
 'Good night, true brother, here! good  
 morrow there!  
 We two were born together, and we  
 die  
 Together by one doom:' and while  
 he spoke  
 Closed his death-drowsing eyes, and  
 slept the sleep  
 With Balin, either lock'd in either's  
 arm. <sup>620</sup>

### MERLIN AND VIVIEN

A STORM was coming, but the winds  
 were still,  
 And in the wild woods of Broceliande,  
 Before an oak, so hollow, huge, and  
 old  
 It look'd a tower of ivied masonwork,  
 At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

For he that always bare in bitter  
 grudge  
 The slights of Arthur and his Table,  
 Mark  
 The Cornish King, had heard a wan-  
 dering voice,  
 A minstrel of Caerleon by strong  
 storm  
 Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say <sup>10</sup>  
 That out of naked knight-like purity  
 Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried  
 girl,  
 But the great Queen herself, fought  
 in her name,  
 Sware by her — vows like theirs that  
 high in heaven  
 Love most, but neither marry nor are  
 given  
 In marriage, angels of our Lord's re-  
 port.

He ceased, and then — for Vivien  
 sweetly said —  
 She sat beside the banquet nearest  
 Mark, —  
 'And is the fair example follow'd, sir,  
 In Arthur's household?' — answer'd  
 innocently: — <sup>20</sup>

'Ay, by some few — ay, truly —  
 youths that hold  
 It more beseems the perfect virgin  
 knight  
 To worship woman as true wife be-  
 yond  
 All hopes of gaining, than as maiden  
 girl.  
 They place their pride in Lancelot  
 and the Queen.  
 So passionate for an utter purity  
 Beyond the limit of their bond are  
 these,  
 For Arthur bound them not to single-  
 ness.  
 Brave hearts and clean! and yet —  
 God guide them! — young.'

Then Mark was half in heart to  
 hurl his cup <sup>30</sup>  
 Straight at the speaker, but forbore.  
 He rose  
 To leave the hall, and, Vivien follow-  
 ing him,  
 Turn'd to her: 'Here are snakes within  
 the grass;  
 And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye  
 fear  
 The monkish manhood, and the mask  
 of pure  
 Worn by this court, can stir them till  
 they sting.'

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scorn-  
 fully:  
 'Why fear? because that foster'd at  
 thy court  
 I savor of thy — virtues? fear them?  
 no,  
 As love, if love be perfect, casts out  
 fear, <sup>40</sup>  
 So hate, if hate be perfect, casts out  
 fear.  
 My father died in battle against the  
 King,  
 My mother on his corpse in open field;  
 She bore me there, for born from  
 death was I

Among the dead and sown upon the  
wind —

And then on thee! and shown the  
truth betimes,

That old true filth, and bottom of the  
well,

Where Truth is hidden. Gracious  
lessons thine,

And maxims of the mud! "This  
Arthur pure!

Great Nature thro' the flesh herself  
hath made

50

Gives him the lie! There is no being  
pure,

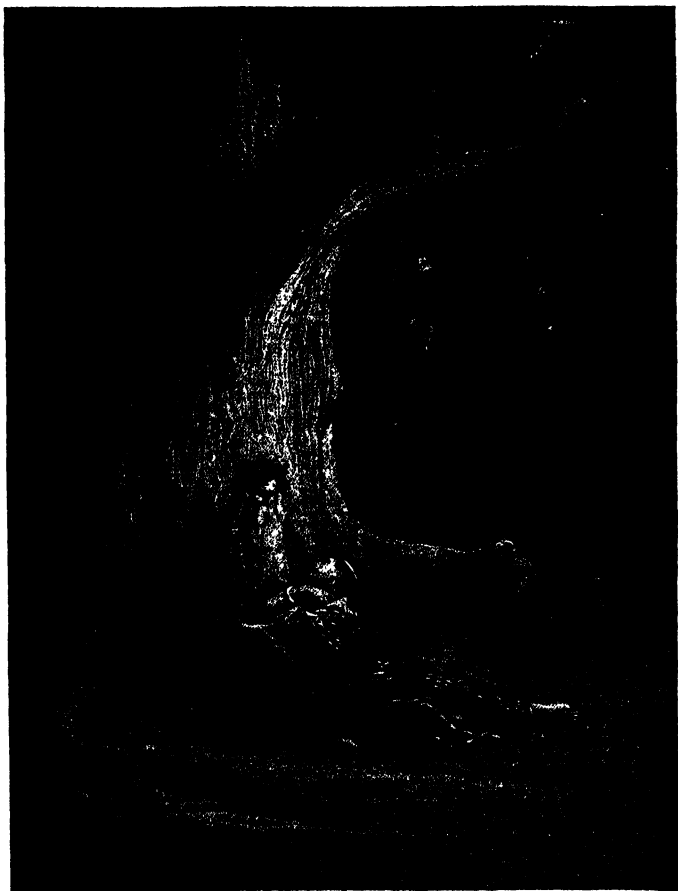
My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the  
same?" —

If I were Arthur, I would have thy  
blood.

Thy blessing, stainless King! I bring  
thee back,

When I have ferreted out their bur-  
rowings,

The hearts of all this Order in mine  
hand —



'At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay'

Ay — so that fate and craft and folly  
 close,  
 Perchance, one curl of Arthur's golden  
 beard.  
 To me this narrow grizzled fork of  
 thine  
 Is cleaner-fashion'd — Well, I loved  
 thee first; 60  
 That warps the wit.'

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark.  
 But Vivien, into Camelot stealing,  
 lodged  
 Low in the city, and on a festal  
 day  
 When Guinevere was crossing the  
 great hall  
 Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen,  
 and wail'd.

'Why kneel ye there? What evil  
 have ye wrought?  
 Rise!' and the damsel bidden rise  
 arose  
 And stood with folded hands and  
 downward eyes  
 Of glancing corner and all meekly  
 said:  
 'None wrought, but suffer'd much,  
 an orphan maid! 70  
 My father died in battle for thy King,  
 My mother on his corpse — in open  
 field,  
 The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyon-  
 nesse —  
 Poor wretch — no friend! — and now  
 by Mark the king,  
 For that small charm of feature mine,  
 pursued —  
 If any such be mine — I fly to thee.  
 Save, save me thou! Woman of wo-  
 men — thine  
 The wreath of beauty, thine the crown  
 of power,  
 Be thine the balm of pity, O heaven's  
 own white  
 Earth-angel, stainless bride of stainless  
 King — 80  
 Help, for he follows! take me to thy-  
 self!  
 O yield me shelter for mine innocence  
 Among thy maidens!'

Here her slow sweet eyes  
 Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful,  
 rose

Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen  
 who stood  
 All glittering like May sunshine on  
 May leaves  
 In green and gold, and plumed with  
 green, replied:  
 'Peace, child! of over-praise and over-  
 blame  
 We choose the last. Our noble Arthur,  
 him  
 Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear  
 and know.  
 Nay — we believe all evil of thy 90  
 Mark —  
 Well, we shall test thee farther; but  
 this hour  
 We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.  
 He hath given us a fair falcon which  
 he train'd;  
 We go to prove it. Bide ye here the  
 while.'

She past; and Vivien murmur'd  
 after, 'Go!  
 I bide the while.' Then thro' the  
 portal-arch  
 Peering askance, and muttering bro-  
 ken-wise,  
 As one that labors with an evil dream,  
 Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to  
 horse. 100

'Is that the Lancelot? goodly — ay,  
 but gaunt;  
 Courteous — amends for gauntness —  
 takes her hand —  
 That glance of theirs, but for the  
 street, had been  
 A clinging kiss — how hand lingers in  
 hand!  
 Let go at last! — they ride away — to  
 hawk  
 For waterfowl. Royaller game is  
 mine.  
 For such a supersensual sensual bond  
 As that gray cricket chirpt of at our  
 hearth —  
 Touch flax with flame — a glance will  
 serve — the liars!  
 Ah little rat that borest in the dyke 110  
 Thy hole by night to let the boundless  
 deep  
 Down upon far-off cities while they  
 dance —  
 Or dream — of thee they dream'd not  
 — nor of me

These—ay, but each of either; ride,  
and dream  
The mortal dream that never yet was  
mine—  
Ride, ride and dream until ye wake—  
to me!  
Then, narrow court and lubber King,  
farewell!  
For Lancelot will be gracious to the  
rat,  
And our wise Queen, if knowing that  
I know,  
Will hate, loathe, fear—but honor  
me the more.' 120

Yet while they rode together down  
the plain,  
Their talk was all of training, terms  
of art,  
Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and lure.  
'She is too noble,' he said, 'to check  
at pies,  
Nor will she rake: there is no baseness  
in her.'  
Here when the Queen demanded as  
by chance,  
'Know ye the stranger woman?' 'Let  
her be,'  
Said Lancelot, and unhooded casting  
off  
The goodly falcon free; she tower'd;  
her bells,  
Tone under tone, shrill'd; and they  
lifted up 130  
Their eager faces, wondering at the  
strength,  
Boldness, and royal knighthood of  
the bird,  
Who pounced her quarry and slew it.  
Many a time  
As once—of old—among the flowers  
—they rode.

But Vivien half-forgotten of the  
Queen  
Among her damsels broidering sat,  
heard, watch'd,  
And whisper'd. Thro' the peaceful  
court she crept  
And whisper'd; then, as Arthur in  
the highest  
Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the  
lowest,  
Arriving at a time of golden rest, 140  
And sowing one ill hint from ear to  
ear,

While all the heathen lay at Arthur's  
feet,  
And no guest came, but all was joust  
and play,  
Leaven'd his hall. They heard and  
let her be.

Thereafter, as an enemy that has  
left  
Death in the living waters and with-  
drawn,  
The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's  
court.

She hated all the knights, and heard  
in thought  
Their lavish comment when her name  
was named.  
For once, when Arthur walking all  
alone, 150  
Vext at a rumor issued from herself  
Of some corruption crept among his  
knights,  
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted  
fair,  
Would fain have wrought upon his  
cloudy mood  
With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken  
voice,  
And flutter'd adoration, and at last  
With dark sweet hints of some who  
prized him more  
Than who should prize him most; at  
which the King  
Had gazed upon her blankly and gone  
by.  
But one had watch'd, and had not  
held his peace; 160  
It made the laughter of an afternoon  
That Vivien should attempt the  
blameless King.  
And after that, she set herself to gain  
Him, the most famous man of all  
those times,  
Merlin, who knew the range of all  
their arts,  
Had built the King his havens, ships,  
and halls,  
Was also bard, and knew the starry  
heavens;  
The people call'd him wizard; whom  
at first  
She play'd about with slight and  
sprightly talk,  
And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd  
points 170

Of slander, glancing here and grazing  
 there;  
 And yielding to his kindlier moods,  
 the seer  
 Would watch her at her petulance  
 and play,  
 Even when they seem'd unlovable,  
 and laugh  
 As those that watch a kitten. Thus  
 he grew  
 Tolerant of what he half disdain'd,  
 and she,  
 Perceiving that she was but half dis-  
 dain'd,  
 Began to break her sports with graver  
 fits,  
 Turn red or pale, would often when  
 they met  
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
 With such a fixt devotion that the old  
 man, 181  
 Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and  
 at times  
 Would flatter his own wish in age for  
 love,  
 And half believe her true; for thus at  
 times  
 He waver'd, but that ðther clung to  
 him,  
 Fixt in her will, and so the seasons  
 went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melan-  
 choly;  
 He walk'd with dreams and darkness,  
 and he found  
 A doom that ever poised itself to fall,  
 An ever-moaning battle in the mist,  
 World-war of dying flesh against the  
 life, 191  
 Death in all life and lying in all love,  
 The meanest having power upon the  
 highest,  
 And the high purpose broken by the  
 worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd  
 the beach,  
 There found a little boat and stept  
 into it;  
 And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd  
 her not.  
 She took the helm and he the sail;  
 the boat  
 Drave with a sudden wind across the  
 deeps,

And, touching Breton sands, they dis-  
 embark'd. 200  
 And then she follow'd Merlin all the  
 way,  
 Even to the wild woods of Broceliande.  
 For Merlin once had told her of a  
 charm,  
 The which if any wrought on any one  
 With woven paces and with waving  
 arms,  
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd  
 to lie  
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow  
 tower,  
 From which was no escape for ever-  
 more;  
 And none could find that man for  
 evermore,  
 Nor could he see but him who wrought  
 the charm 210  
 Coming and going, and he lay as dead  
 And lost to life and use and name and  
 fame.  
 And Vivien ever sought to work the  
 charm  
 Upon the great enchanter of the time,  
 As fancying that her glory would be  
 great  
 According to his greatness whom she  
 quench'd.

There lay she all her length and  
 kiss'd his feet,  
 As if in deepest reverence and in love.  
 A twist of gold was round her hair; a  
 robe  
 Of samite without price, that more  
 exprest 220  
 Than hid her, clung about her lissome  
 limbs,  
 In color like the satin-shining palm  
 On sawlows in the windy gleams of  
 March.  
 And while she kiss'd them, crying,  
 'Trample me,  
 Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro'  
 the world,  
 And I will pay you worship; tread  
 me down  
 And I will kiss you for it;' he was  
 mute.  
 So dark a forethought roll'd about his  
 brain,  
 As on a dull day in an ocean cave.  
 The blind wave feeling round his long  
 sea-hall 230

In silence ; wherefore, when she lifted  
 up  
 A face of sad appeal, and spake and  
 said,  
 'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and again,  
 'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and once  
 more,  
 'Great Master, do ye love me?' he  
 was mute.  
 And lissome Vivien, holding by his  
 heel,  
 Writhed toward him, slid up his  
 knee and sat,  
 Behind his ankle twined her hollow  
 feet  
 Together, curved an arm about his  
 neck,  
 Clung like a snake; and letting her  
 left hand <sup>240</sup>  
 Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a  
 leaf,  
 Made with her right a comb of pearl  
 to part  
 The lists of such a beard as youth  
 gone out  
 Had left in ashes. Then he spoke and  
 said,  
 Not looking at her, 'Who are wise in  
 love  
 Love most, say least,' and Vivien an-  
 swer'd quick :  
 'I saw the little elf-god eyeless once  
 In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot;  
 But neither eyes nor tongue—O stupid  
 child!  
 Yet you are wise who say it; let me  
 think <sup>250</sup>  
 Silence is wisdom. I am silent then,  
 And ask no kiss;' then adding all at  
 once,  
 'And lo, I clothe myself with wis-  
 dom,' drew  
 The vast and shaggy mantle of his  
 beard  
 Across her neck and bosom to her  
 knee,  
 And call'd herself a gilded summer fly  
 Caught in a great old tyrant spider's  
 web,  
 Who meant to eat her up in that wild  
 wood  
 Without one word. So Vivien call'd  
 herself,  
 But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star  
 Veil'd in gray vapor; till he sadly  
 smiled: <sup>261</sup>

'To what request for what strange  
 boon,' he said,  
 'Are these your pretty tricks and  
 fooleries,  
 O Vivien, the preamble? yet my  
 thanks,  
 For these have broken up my melan-  
 choly.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling sau-  
 cily :  
 'What, O my Master, have ye found  
 your voice?  
 I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks  
 at last!  
 But yesterday you never open'd lip,  
 Except indeed to drink. No cup had  
 we; <sup>270</sup>  
 In mine own lady palms I cull'd the  
 spring  
 That gather'd trickling dropwise from  
 the cleft,  
 And made a pretty cup of both my  
 hands  
 And offer'd you it kneeling. Then  
 you drank  
 And knew no more, nor gave me one  
 poor word;  
 O, no more thanks than might a goat  
 have given  
 With no more sign of reverence than  
 a beard.  
 And when we halted at that other  
 well,  
 And I was faint to swooning, and  
 you lay  
 Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of  
 those <sup>280</sup>  
 Deep meadows we had traversed, did  
 you know  
 That Vivien bathed your feet before  
 her own?  
 And yet no thanks; and all thro' this  
 wild wood  
 And all this morning when I fondled  
 you.  
 Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not  
 so strange—  
 How had I wrong'd you? surely ye  
 are wise,  
 But such a silence is more wise than  
 kind.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers  
 and said :  
 'O, did ye never lie upon the shore,



And watch the curl'd white of the  
 coming wave <sup>290</sup>  
 Glass'd in the slippery sand before it  
 breaks?  
 Even such a wave, but not so plea-  
 surable,  
 Dark in the glass of some presageful  
 mood,  
 Had I for three days seen, ready to  
 fall.  
 And then I rose and fled from Arthur's  
 court  
 To break the mood. You follow'd  
 me unask'd;  
 And when I look'd, and saw you fol-  
 lowing still,  
 My mind involved yourself the near-  
 est thing  
 In that mind-mist—for shall I tell  
 you truth?  
 You seem'd that wave about to break  
 upon me <sup>300</sup>  
 And sweep me from my hold upon  
 the world,  
 My use and name and fame. Your  
 pardon, child.  
 Your pretty sports have brighten'd all  
 again.  
 And ask your boon, for boon I owe  
 you thrice,  
 Once for wrong done you by confusion,  
 next  
 For thanks it seems till now neglected,  
 last  
 For these your dainty gambols; where-  
 fore ask,  
 And take this boon so strange and not  
 so strange.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mourn-  
 fully:  
 'O, not so strange as my long asking  
 it, <sup>310</sup>  
 Not yet so strange as you yourself are  
 strange,  
 Nor half so strange as that dark mood  
 of yours.  
 I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine;  
 And see, yourself have own'd ye did  
 me wrong.  
 The people call you prophet; let it  
 be;  
 But not of those that can expound  
 themselves.  
 Take Vivien for expounder; she will  
 call

That three-days-long presageful gloom  
 of yours  
 No presage, but the same mistrustful  
 mood  
 That makes you seem less noble than  
 yourself, <sup>320</sup>  
 Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,  
 Now ask'd again; for see you not,  
 dear love,  
 That such a mood as that which lately  
 gloom'd  
 Your fancy when ye saw me follow-  
 ing you  
 Must make me fear still more you are  
 not mine,  
 Must make me yearn still more to  
 prove you mine,  
 And make me wish still more to learn  
 this charm  
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
 As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it  
 me!  
 The charm so taught will charm us  
 both to rest. <sup>330</sup>  
 For, grant me some slight power upon  
 your fate,  
 I, feeling that you felt me worthy  
 trust,  
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing  
 you mine.  
 And therefore be as great as ye are  
 named,  
 Not muffled round with selfish reti-  
 cence.  
 How hard you look and how deny-  
 ingly!  
 O, if you think this wickedness in me,  
 That I should prove it on you un-  
 awares,  
 That makes me passing wrathful;  
 then our bond  
 Had best be loosed for ever; but  
 think or not, <sup>340</sup>  
 By Heaven that hears, I tell you the  
 clean truth,  
 As clean as blood of babes, as white  
 as milk!  
 O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,  
 If these unwitty wandering wits of  
 mine,  
 Even in the jumbled rubbish of a  
 dream,  
 Have tript on such conjectural treach-  
 ery—  
 May this hard earth cleave to the  
 nadir hell

Down, down, and close again and nip  
 me flat,  
 If I be such a traitress! Yield my  
 boon,  
 Till which I scarce can yield you all  
 I am; <sup>350</sup>  
 And grant my re-reiterated wish,  
 The great proof of your love; because  
 I think,  
 However wise, ye hardly know me  
 yet.'

And Merlin loosed his hand from  
 hers and said:  
 'I never was less wise, however wise,  
 Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of  
 trust,  
 Than when I told you first of such a  
 charm.  
 Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,  
 Too much I trusted when I told you  
 that,  
 And stirr'd this vice in you which  
 ruin'd man <sup>360</sup>  
 Thro' woman the first hour; for how-  
 soe'er  
 In children a great curiousness be  
 well,  
 Who have to learn themselves and all  
 the world,  
 In you, that are no child, for still I  
 find  
 Your face is practised when I spell  
 the lines,  
 I call it, — well, I will not call it  
 vice;  
 But since you name yourself the sum-  
 mer fly,  
 I well could wish a cobweb for the  
 gnat  
 That settles beaten back, and beaten  
 back  
 Settles, till one could yield for wear-  
 ness. <sup>370</sup>  
 But since I will not yield to give you  
 power  
 Upon my life and use and name and  
 fame,  
 Why will ye never ask some other  
 boon?  
 Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too  
 much!'

And Vivien, like the tenderest-  
 hearted maid  
 That ever bided tryst at village stile,

Made answer, either eyelid wet with  
 tears:  
 'Nay, Master, be not wrathful with  
 your maid;  
 Caress her, let her feel herself for-  
 given  
 Who feels no heart to ask another  
 boon. <sup>380</sup>  
 I think ye hardly know the tender  
 rhyme  
 Of "trust me not at all or all in  
 all."  
 I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it  
 once,  
 And it shall answer for me. Listen  
 to it.

"In love, if love be love, if love be  
 ours,  
 Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal pow-  
 ers:  
 Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

"It is the little rift within the lute,  
 That by and by will make the music mute,  
 And ever widening slowly silence all. <sup>390</sup>

"The little rift within the lover's lute,  
 Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,  
 That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

"It is not worth the keeping; let it go:  
 But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.  
 And trust me not at all or all in all."

'O master, do ye love my tender  
 rhyme?'

And Merlin look'd and half believed  
 her true,  
 So tender was her voice, so fair her  
 face,  
 So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind  
 her tears <sup>400</sup>  
 Like sunlight on the plain behind a  
 shower;  
 And yet he answer'd half indignantly:

'Far other was the song that once  
 I heard  
 By this huge oak, sung nearly where  
 we sit;  
 For here we met, some ten or twelve  
 of us,  
 To chase a creature that was current  
 then  
 In these wild woods, the hart with  
 golden horns.

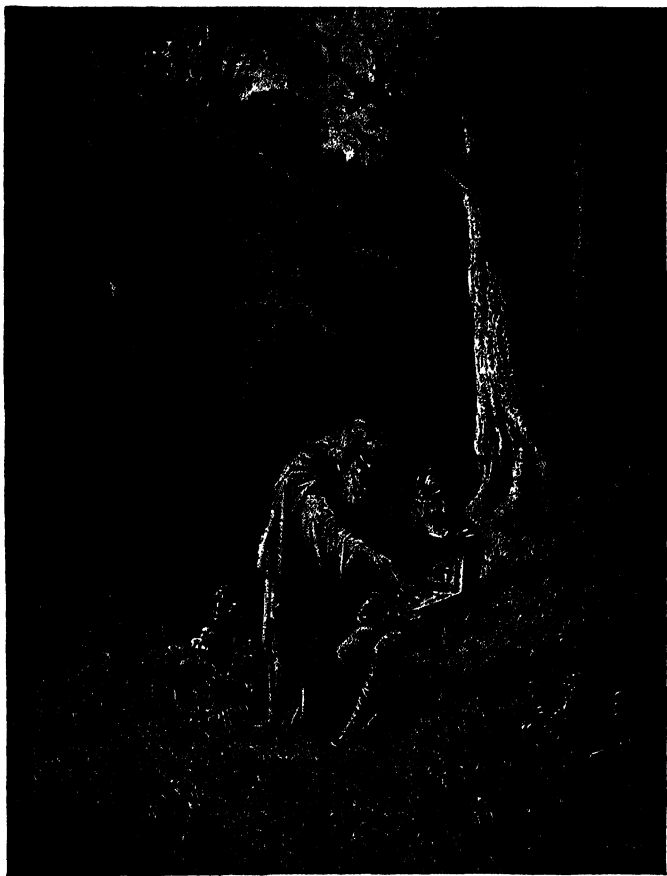
It was the time when first the question rose  
 About the founding of a Table Round,  
 That was to be, for love of God and men  
 And noble deeds, the flower of all the world;  
 And each incited each to noble deeds.  
 And while we waited, one, the youngest of us,  
 We could not keep him silent, out he flash'd,  
 And into such a song, such fire for fame,  
 Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down  
 To such a stern and iron-clashing close,  
 That when he stopt we long'd to hurl together,  
 And should have done it, but the beauteous beast  
 Scared by the noise upstart at our feet,  
 And like a silver shadow slipt away  
 Thro' the dim land. And all day long we rode  
 Thro' the dim land against a rushing wind,  
 That glorious roundel echoing in our ears,  
 And chased the flashes of his golden horns  
 Until they vanish'd by the fairy well  
 That laughs at iron—as our warriors did—  
 Where children cast their pins and nails, and cry  
 "Laugh, little well!" but touch it with a sword,  
 It buzzes fiercely round the point; and there  
 We lost him—such a noble song was that.  
 But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet rhyme,  
 I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,  
 Were proving it on me, and that I lay  
 And felt them slowly ebbing, name and fame.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully:  
 'O, mine have ebb'd away for evermore,

And all thro' following you to this wild wood,  
 Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.  
 Lo now, what hearts have men! they never mount  
 As high as woman in her selfless mood.  
 And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn my song,  
 Take one verse more—the lady speaks it—this:

"My name, once mine, now thine, is closelier mine,  
 For fame, could fame be mine, that fame were thine,  
 And, shame, could shame be thine, that shame were mine.  
 So trust me not at all or all in all."

'Says she not well? and there is more—this rhyme  
 Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the Queen,  
 That burst in dancing and the pearls were spilt;  
 Some lost, some stolen, some as relics kept;  
 But nevertheless the same two sister pearls  
 Ran down the silken thread to kiss each other  
 On her white neck—so is it with this rhyme.  
 It lives dispersedly in many hands,  
 And every minstrel sings it differently;  
 Yet is there one true line, the pearl of pearls:  
 "Man dreams of fame while woman wakes to love."  
 Yea! love, tho' love were of the gross-est, carves  
 A portion from the solid present,  
 And uses, careless of the rest; but fame,  
 The fame that follows death is nothing to us;  
 And what is fame in life but half-disfame  
 And counterchanged with darkness? ye yourself  
 Know well that envy calls you devil's son,  
 And since ye seem the master of all art,  
 They fain would make you master of all vice.'



"I took his brush and blotted out the bird"

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers  
and said :  
'I once was looking for a magic weed,  
And found a fair young squire who  
sat alone, 470  
Had carved himself a knightly shield  
of wood,  
And then was painting on it fancied  
arms,  
Azure, an eagle rising or, the sun  
In dexter chief; the scroll, "I follow  
fame."

And speaking not, but leaning over  
him,  
I took his brush and blotted out the  
bird,  
And made a gardener putting in a  
graff,  
With this for motto, "Rather use than  
fame."  
You should have seen him blush; but  
afterwards  
He made a stalwart knight. O Vi-  
vien, 480

For you, methinks you think you love  
     me well ;  
 For me, I love you somewhat. Rest ;  
     and Love  
 Should have some rest and pleasure in  
     himself,  
 Not ever be too curious for a boon,  
 Too prurient for a proof against the  
     grain  
 Of him ye say ye love. But Fame  
     with men,  
 Being but ampler means to serve man-  
     kind,  
 Should have small rest or pleasure in  
     herself,  
 But work as vassal to the larger love  
 That dwarfs the petty love of one to  
     one. 490  
 Use gave me fame at first, and fame  
     again  
 Increasing gave me use. Lo, there  
     my boon !  
 What other ? for men sought to prove  
     me vile,  
 Because I fain had given them greater  
     wits ;  
 And then did envy call me devil's  
     son.  
 The sick weak beast, seeking to help  
     herself  
 By striking at her better, miss'd, and  
     brought  
 Her own claw back, and wounded her  
     own heart.  
 Sweet were the days when I was all  
     unknown,  
 But when my name was lifted up the  
     storm 500  
 Brake on the mountain and I cared  
     not for it,  
 Right well know I that fame is half-  
     disfame,  
 Yet needs must work my work. That  
     other fame,  
 To one at least who hath not children  
     vague,  
 The cackle of the unborn about the  
     grave,  
 I cared not for it. A single misty  
     star,  
 Which is the second in a line of stars  
 That seem a sword beneath a belt of  
     three,  
 I never gazed upon it but I dreamt  
 Of some vast charm concluded in that  
     star 510

To make fame nothing. Wherefore,  
     if I fear,  
 Giving you power upon me thro' this  
     charm,  
 That you might play me falsely, hav-  
     ing power,  
 However well ye think ye love me  
     now —  
 As sons of kings loving in pupillage  
 Have turn'd to tyrants when they  
     came to power —  
 I rather dread the loss of use than  
     fame ;  
 If you — and not so much from wicked-  
     ness,  
 As some wild turn of anger, or a  
     mood  
 Of overstrain'd affection, it may be, 520  
 To keep me all to your own self, — or  
     else  
 A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy, —  
 Should try this charm on whom ye say  
     ye love.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in  
     wrath :  
 'Have I not sworn ? I am not trusted.  
     Good !  
 Well, hide it, hide it ; I shall find it  
     out,  
 And being found take heed of Vivien.  
 A woman and not trusted, doubtless I  
 Might feel some sudden turn of anger  
     born  
 Of your misfaith ; and your fine epi-  
     thet 530  
 Is accurate too, for this full love of  
     mine  
 Without the full heart back may merit  
     well  
 Your term of overstrain'd. So used  
     as I,  
 My daily wonder is, I love at all.  
 And as to woman's jealousy, O, why  
     not ?  
 O, to what end, except a jealous one,  
 And one to make me jealous if I  
     love,  
 Was this fair charm invented by your-  
     self ?  
 I well believe that all about this world  
 Ye cage a buxom captive here and  
     there, 540  
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow  
     tower  
 From which is no escape for evermore.'

Then the great master merrily answered her :  
 ' Full many a love in loving youth  
 was mine ;  
 I needed then no charm to keep them  
 mine  
 But youth and love ; and that full  
 heart of yours  
 Whereof ye prattle, may now assure  
 you mine ;  
 So live uncharm'd. For those who  
 wrought it first,  
 The wrist is parted from the hand that  
 waved,  
 The feet unmortised from their ankle-  
 bones 550  
 Who paced it, ages back — but will ye  
 hear  
 The legend as in guerdon for your  
 rhyme ?

' There lived a king in the most  
 eastern East,  
 Less old than I, yet older, for my  
 blood  
 Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.  
 A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,  
 Whose bark had plunder'd twenty  
 nameless isles ;  
 And passing one, at the high peep of  
 dawn,  
 He saw two cities in a thousand boats  
 All fighting for a woman on the  
 sea. 560  
 And pushing his black craft among  
 them all  
 He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought  
 her off,  
 With loss of half his people arrow-  
 slain ;  
 A maid so smooth, so white, so won-  
 derful,  
 They said a light came from her when  
 she moved.  
 And since the pirate would not yield  
 her up,  
 The king impaled him for his piracy,  
 Then made her queen. But those isle-  
 nurtured eyes  
 Waged such unwilling tho' successful  
 war  
 On all the youth, they sicken'd ; coun-  
 cils thinn'd, 570  
 And armies waned, for magnet-like  
 she drew  
 The rustiest iron of old fighters' hearts ;

And beasts themselves would worship ;  
 camels knelt  
 Unbidden, and the brutes of moun-  
 tain back  
 That carry kings in castles bow'd  
 black knees  
 Of homage, ringing with their serpent  
 hands,  
 To make her smile, her golden ankle-  
 bells.  
 What wonder, being jealous, that he  
 sent  
 His horns of proclamation out thro'  
 all  
 The hundred under-kingdoms that he  
 sway'd 580  
 To find a wizard who might teach the  
 king  
 Some charm which, being wrought  
 upon the queen,  
 Might keep her all his own. To such  
 a one  
 He promised more than ever king has  
 given,  
 A league of mountain full of golden  
 mines,  
 A province with a hundred miles of  
 coast,  
 A palace and a princess, all for him ;  
 But on all those who tried and fail'd  
 the king  
 Pronounced a dismal sentence, mean-  
 ing by it  
 To keep the list low and pretenders  
 back, 590  
 Or, like a king, not to be trifled with —  
 Their heads should moulder on the  
 city gates.  
 And many tried and fail'd, because  
 the charm  
 Of nature in her overbore their own ;  
 And many a wizard brow bleach'd on  
 the walls,  
 And many weeks a troop of carrion  
 crows  
 Hung like a cloud above the gateway  
 towers.'

And Vivien breaking in upon him,  
 said :  
 ' I sit and gather honey ; yet, methinks,  
 Thy tongue has tript a little ; ask thy-  
 self. 600  
 The lady never made *unwilling* war  
 With those fine eyes ; she had her  
 pleasure in it,

And made her good man jealous with  
good cause.

And lived there neither dame nor dam-  
sel then

Wr<sup>o</sup>th at a lover's loss? were all as  
tame,

I mean, as noble, as their queen was  
fair?

Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,  
Or pinch a murderous dust into her  
drink,

Or make her paler with a poison'd  
rose?

Well, those were not our days—but  
did they find <sup>610</sup>

A wizard? Tell me, was he like to  
thee?

She ceased, and made her lithe arm  
round his neck

Tighten, and then drew back, and let  
her eyes

Speak for her, glowing on him, like a  
bride's

On her new lord, her own, the first of  
men.

He answer'd laughing: 'Nay, not  
like to me.

At last they found—his foragers for  
charms—

A little glassy-headed hairless man,  
Who lived alone in a great wild on  
grass,

Read but one book, and ever reading  
grew <sup>620</sup>

So grated down and fled away with  
thought,

So lean his eyes were monstrous;  
while the skin

Clung but to crate and basket, ribs  
and spine.

And since he kept his mind on one sole  
aim,

Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor  
tasted flesh,

Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the  
wall

That sunders ghosts and shadow-cast-  
ing men

Became a crystal, and he saw them  
thro' it,

And heard their voices talk behind the  
wall,

And learnt their elemental secrets,  
powers <sup>630</sup>

And forces; often o'er the sun's bright  
eye

Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,  
And lash'd it at the base with slanting  
storm;

Or in the noon of mist and driving  
rain,

When the lake whiten'd and the pine-  
wood roar'd,

And the cairn'd mountain was a shad-  
ow, sunn'd

The world to peace again. Here was  
the man;

And so by force they dragg'd him to  
the king.

And then he taught the king to charm  
the queen

In such-wise that no man could see  
her more, <sup>640</sup>

Nor saw she save the king, who  
wrought the charm,

Coming and going, and she lay as  
dead,

And lost all use of life. But when the  
king

Made proffer of the league of golden  
mines,

The province with a hundred miles of  
coast,

The palace and the princess, that old  
man

Went back to his old wild, and lived  
on grass,

And vanish'd, and his book came  
down to me.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling sau-  
cily:

'Ye have the book; the charm is writ-  
ten in it. <sup>650</sup>

Good! take my counsel, let me know  
it at once;

For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,  
With each chest lock'd and padlock'd

thirty-fold,  
And whelm all this beneath as vast a  
mound

As after furious battle turfs the slain  
On some wild down above the windy  
deep,

I yet should strike upon a sudden  
means

To dig, pick, open, find and read the  
charm:

Then, if I tried it, who should blame  
me then?'

And smiling as a master smiles at  
 one <sup>660</sup>  
 That is not of his school, nor any school  
 But that where blind and naked Ignorance  
 Delivers brawling judgments, un-  
 ashamed,  
 On all things all day long, he answer'd  
 her :

'Thou read the book, my pretty  
 Vivien !  
 O, ay, it is but twenty pages long,  
 But every page having an ample  
 marge,  
 And every marge enclosing in the midst  
 A square of text that looks a little blot,  
 The text no larger than the limbs of  
 fleas ; <sup>670</sup>  
 And every square of text an awful  
 charm,  
 Writ in a language that has long gone  
 by,  
 So long that mountains have arisen  
 since  
 With cities on their flanks — thou read  
 the book !  
 And every margin scribbled, crost,  
 and cramm'd  
 With comment, densest condensation,  
 hard  
 To mind and eye ; but the long sleep-  
 less nights  
 Of my long life have made it easy to  
 me.  
 And none can read the text, not even I ;  
 And none can read the comment but  
 myself ; <sup>680</sup>  
 And in the comment did I find the  
 charm.  
 O, the results are simple ; a mere child  
 Might use it to the harm of any one,  
 And never could undo it. Ask no  
 more ;  
 For tho' you should not prove it upon  
 me,  
 But keep that oath ye sware, ye  
 might, perchance,  
 Assay it on some one of the Table  
 Round,  
 And all because ye dream they habble  
 of you.'

And Vivien, frowning in true anger,  
 said :

'What dare the full-fed liars say of me ?

*They* ride abroad redressing human  
 wrongs ! <sup>691</sup>

They sit with knife in meat and wine  
 in horn.

*They* bound to holy vows of chastity !  
 Were I not woman, I could tell a  
 tale.

But you are man, you well can under-  
 stand

The shame that cannot be explain'd  
 for shame.

Not one of all the drove should touch  
 me — swine !'

Then answer'd Merlin careless of  
 her words :

'You breathe but accusation vast and  
 vague,

Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If  
 ye know, <sup>700</sup>

Set up the charge ye know, to stand  
 or fall !'

And Vivien answer'd frowning  
 wrathfully :

'O, ay, what say ye to Sir Valence,  
 him

Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er  
 his wife

And two fair babes, and went to dis-  
 tant lands,

Was one year gone, and on returning  
 found

Not two but three ? there lay the reck-  
 ling, one

But one hour old ! What said the  
 happy sire ?

A seven-months' babe had been a truer  
 gift.

Those twelve sweet moons confused  
 his fatherhood.' <sup>710</sup>

Then answer'd Merlin : 'Nay, I  
 know the tale.

Sir Valence wedded with an outland  
 dame ;

Some cause had kept him sunder'd  
 from his wife.

One child they had ; it lived with her ;  
 she died.

His kinsman travelling on his own af-  
 fair

Was charged by Valence to bring  
 home the child.

He brought, not found it therefore ;  
 take the truth.'



'O, ay,' said Vivien, 'over-true a tale !  
 What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagramore,  
 That ardent man ? "To pluck the flower in season,"  
 So says the song, "I trow it is no treason."  
 O Master, shall we call him over-quick  
 To crop his own sweet rose before the hour ?'

And Merlin answer'd : 'Over-quick art thou  
 To catch a loathly plume fallen from the wing  
 Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole prey  
 Is man's good name. He never wrong'd his bride.  
 I know the tale. An angry gust of wind  
 Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-room'd  
 And many-corridor'd complexities  
 Of Arthur's palace. Then he found a door,  
 And darkling felt the sculptured ornament  
 That wreathen round it made it seem his own,  
 And wearied out made for the couch and slept,  
 A stainless man beside a stainless maid ;  
 And either slept, nor knew of other there,  
 Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose  
 In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely down,  
 Blushing upon them blushing, and at once  
 He rose without a word and parted from her.  
 But when the thing was blazed about the court,  
 The brute world howling forced them into bonds,  
 And as it chanced they are happy, being pure.'

'O, ay,' said Vivien, 'that were likely too !  
 What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale

And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,  
 The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of Christ,  
 Or some black wether of Saint Satan's fold ?  
 What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,  
 Among the knightly brasses of the graves,  
 And by the cold Hic Jacets of the dead !'

And Merlin answer'd careless of her charge :  
 'A sober man is Percivale and pure,  
 But once in life was fluster'd with new wine,  
 Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard,  
 Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught  
 And meant to stamp him with her master's mark.  
 And that he sinn'd is not believable ;  
 For, look upon his face ! — but if he sinn'd,  
 The sin that practice burns into the blood,  
 And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,  
 Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be ;  
 Or else were he, the holy king whose hymns  
 Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.  
 But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye more ?'

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in wrath :  
 'O, ay ; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend,  
 Traitor or true ? that commerce with the Queen,  
 I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,  
 Or whisper'd in the corner ? do ye know it ?'

To which he answer'd sadly : 'Yea, I know it.  
 Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,  
 To fetch her, and she watch'd him from her walls.

A rumor runs, she took him for the  
King,  
So fixt her fancy on him; let them  
be.  
But have ye now one word of loyal  
praise  
For Arthur, blameless king and stain-  
less man ?

She answer'd with a low and chuc-  
kling laugh :  
'Man! is he man at all, who knows  
and winks ?  
Sees what his fair bride is and does,  
and winks ?'  
By which the good King means to  
blind himself,  
And blinds himself and all the Table  
Round  
To all the foulness that they work.  
Myself  
Could call him — were it not for wo-  
manhood —  
The pretty, popular name such man-  
hood earns,  
Could call him the main cause of all  
their crime,  
Yea, were he not crown'd king, cow-  
ard and fool.'

Then Merlin to his own heart, loath-  
ing, said :  
'O true and tender ! O my liege and  
King !  
O selfless man and stainless gentle-  
man,  
Who wouldst against thine own eye-  
witness fain  
Have all men true and leal, all women  
pure !  
How, in the mouths of base interpre-  
ters,  
From over-fineness not intelligible  
To things with every sense as false  
and foul  
As the poach'd filth that floods the  
middle street,  
Is thy white blamelessness accounted  
blame !'

But Vivien, deeming Merlin over-  
borne  
By instance, recommenced, and let  
her tongue  
Rage like a fire among the noblest  
names,

Polluting, and imputing her whole  
self,  
Defaming and defacing, till she left  
Not even Lancelot brave nor Galahad  
clean.

Her words had issue other than she  
will'd.  
He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down,  
and made  
A snowy pent-house for his hollow  
eyes,  
And mutter'd in himself : 'Tell *her*  
the charm !  
So, if she had it, would she rail on  
me  
To snare the next, and if she have it  
not  
So will she rail. What did the wan-  
ton say ?  
'Not mount as high !' we scarce  
can sink as low ;  
For men at most differ as heaven and  
earth,  
But women, worst and best, as hea-  
ven and hell.  
I know the Table Round, my friends  
of old ;  
All brave, and many generous, and  
some chaste.  
She cloaks the scar of some repulse  
with lies.  
I well believe she tempted them and  
fail'd,  
Being so bitter ; for fine plots may  
fail,  
Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as  
face  
With colors of the heart that are not  
theirs.  
I will not let her know ; nine tithes of  
times  
Face-flatterer and backbiter are the  
same.  
And they, sweet soul, that most im-  
pute a crime  
Are prone to it, and impute them-  
selves,  
Wanting the mental range, or low de-  
sire  
Not to feel lowest makes them level  
all ;  
Yea, they would pare the mountain  
to the plain,  
To leave an equal baseness ; and in  
this

Are harlots like the crowd that if they  
 find  
 Some stain or blemish in a name of  
 note, 830  
 Not grieving that their greatest are so  
 small,  
 Inflate themselves with some insane  
 delight,  
 And judge all nature from her feet of  
 clay,  
 Without the will to lift their eyes, and  
 see  
 Her godlike head crown'd with spirit-  
 ual fire,  
 And touching other worlds. I am  
 weary of her.'

He spoke in words part heard, in  
 whispers part,  
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell  
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat  
 and chin.  
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat of  
 his mood, 840  
 And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd twice  
 or thrice,  
 Leapt from her session on his lap, and  
 stood  
 Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome  
 sight,  
 How from the rosy lips of life and  
 love  
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of  
 death!  
 White was her cheek; sharp breaths  
 of anger puff'd  
 Her fairy nostril out; her hand half-  
 clench'd  
 Went faltering sideways downward  
 to her belt,  
 And feeling. Had she found a dag-  
 ger there—  
 For in a wink the false love turns to  
 hate— 850  
 She would have stabb'd him; but she  
 found it not.  
 His eye was calm, and suddenly she  
 took  
 To bitter weeping like a beaten child,  
 A long, long weeping, not consolable.  
 Then her false voice made way, broken  
 with sobs:

'O crueller than was ever told in tale  
 Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd  
 love!

O cruel, there was nothing wild or  
 strange,  
 Or seeming shameful—for what shame  
 in love,  
 So love be true, and not as yours is?  
 —nothing 860  
 Poor Vivien had not done to win his  
 trust  
 Who call'd her what he call'd her—  
 all her crime,  
 All—all—the wish to prove him  
 wholly hers.'

She mused a little, and then clapt  
 her hands  
 Together with a wailing shriek, and  
 said:  
 'Stabb'd through the heart's affections  
 to the heart!  
 Seethed like the kid in its own mo-  
 ther's milk!  
 Kill'd with a word worse than a life  
 of blows!  
 I thought that he was gentle, being  
 great;  
 O God, that I had loved a smaller man!  
 I should have found in him a greater  
 heart. 871  
 O, I, that flattering my true passion,  
 saw  
 The knights, the court, the King,  
 dark in your light,  
 Who loved to make men darker than  
 they are,  
 Because of that high pleasure which  
 I had  
 To seat you sole upon my pedestal  
 Of worship—I am answer'd, and  
 henceforth  
 The course of life that seem'd so flow-  
 ery to me  
 With you for guide and master, only  
 you,  
 Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken  
 short, 880  
 And ending in a ruin—nothing left  
 But into some low cave to crawl, and  
 there,  
 If the wolf spare me, weep my life  
 away,  
 Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness.'

She paused, she turn'd away, she  
 hung her head,  
 The snake of gold slid from her hair,  
 the braid

Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept  
 afresh,  
 And the dark wood grew darker to-  
 ward the storm  
 In silence, while his anger slowly died  
 Within him, till he let his wisdom go  
 For ease of heart, and half believed  
 her true; <sup>891</sup>  
 Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,  
 'Come from the storm,' and having  
 no reply,  
 Gazed at the heaving shoulder and  
 the face  
 Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or  
 shame;  
 Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-  
 touching terms,  
 To seek her ruffled peace of mind, in  
 vain.  
 At last she let herself be conquer'd by  
 him,  
 And as the cageling newly flown re-  
 turns,  
 The seeming-injured simple-hearted  
 thing <sup>900</sup>  
 Came to her old perch back, and set-  
 tled there.  
 There while she sat, half-falling from  
 his knees,  
 Half-nestled at his heart, and since he  
 saw  
 The slow tear creep from her closed  
 eyelid yet,  
 About her, more in kindness than in  
 love,  
 The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.  
 But she dislink'd herself at once and  
 rose,  
 Her arms upon her breast across, and  
 stood,  
 A virtuous gentlewoman deeply  
 wrong'd,  
 Upright and flush'd before him; then  
 she said: <sup>910</sup>  
 'There must be now no passages of  
 love  
 Betwixt us twain henceforward ever-  
 more;  
 Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,  
 What should be granted which your  
 own gross heart  
 Would reckon worth the taking? I  
 will go.  
 In truth, but one thing now — better  
 have died

Thrice than have ask'd it once — could  
 make me stay —  
 That proof of trust — so often ask'd  
 in vain!  
 How justly, after that vile term of  
 yours,  
 I find with grief! I might believe  
 you then, <sup>920</sup>  
 Who knows? once more. Lo! what  
 was once to me  
 Mere matter of the fancy, now hath  
 grown  
 The vast necessity of heart and life.  
 Farewell; think gently of me, for I  
 fear  
 My fate or folly, passing gayer youth  
 For one so old, must be to love thee  
 still.  
 But ere I leave thee let me swear once  
 more  
 That if I schemed against thy peace  
 in this,  
 May yon just heaven, that darkens  
 o'er me, send  
 One flash that, missing all things else,  
 may make <sup>930</sup>  
 My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.'

Scarce had she ceased, when out of  
 heaven a bolt —  
 For now the storm was close above  
 them — struck,  
 Furrowing a giant oak, and javelin-  
 ing  
 With darted spikes and splinters of  
 the wood  
 The dark earth round. He raised his  
 eyes and saw  
 The tree that shone white-listed thro'  
 the gloom.  
 But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard  
 her oath,  
 And dazzled by the livid-flickering  
 fork,  
 And deafen'd with the stammering  
 cracks and claps <sup>940</sup>  
 That follow'd, flying back and crying  
 out,  
 'O Merlin, tho' you do not love me,  
 save,  
 Yet save me!' clung to him and  
 hugg'd him close;  
 And call'd him dear protector in her  
 fright,  
 Nor yet forgot her practice in her  
 fright,

But wrought upon his mood and  
hugg'd him close.

The pale blood of the wizard at her  
touch

Took gayer colors, like an opal warm'd.

She blamed herself for telling hearsay  
tales;

She shook from fear, and for her fault  
she wept

Of petulancy; she call'd him lord and  
liege,

Herseer, her bard, her silver star of eve,

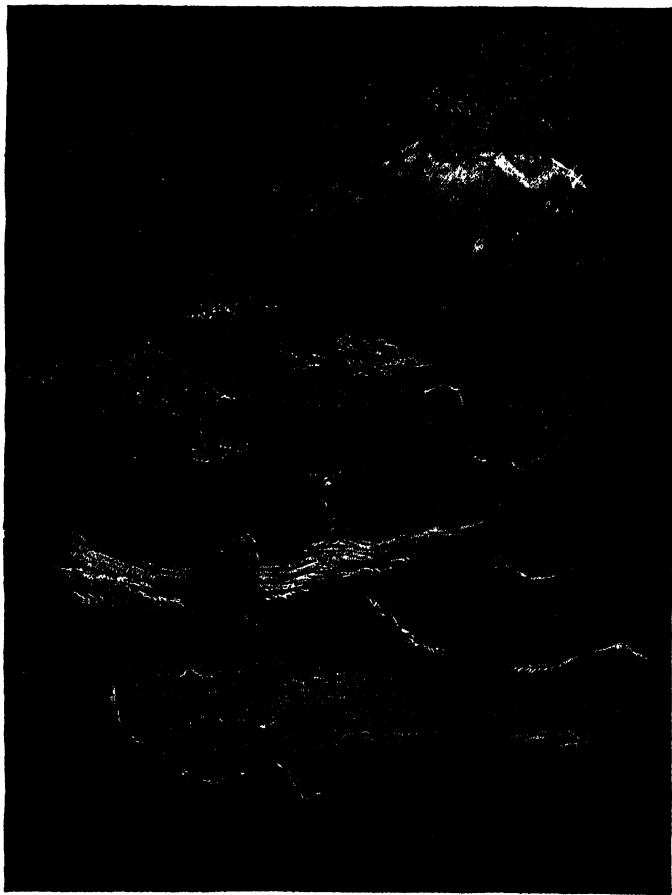
Her God, her Merlin, the one passion-  
ate love

Of her whole life; and ever overhead  
Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten  
branch

Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain  
Above them; and in change of glare  
and gloom

Her eyes and neck glittering went  
and came;

Till now the storm, its burst of pas-  
sion spent,



"I have made his glory mine"

Moaning and calling out of other  
lands,  
Had left the ravaged woodland yet <sup>960</sup>  
once more  
To peace; and what should not have  
been had been,  
For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,  
Had yielded, told her all the charm,  
and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth  
the charm  
Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
And in the hollow oak he lay as  
dead,  
And lost to life and use and name and  
fame.

Then crying, 'I have made his  
glory mine,'  
And shrieking out, 'O fool!' the har-  
lot leapt <sup>970</sup>  
Adown the forest, and the thicket  
closed  
Behind her, and the forest echo'd  
'fool.'

# LANCELOT AND ELAINE

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,  
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,  
High in her chamber up a tower to  
the east  
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;  
Which first she placed where morn-  
ing's earliest ray  
Might strike it, and awake her with  
the gleam;  
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd  
for it  
A case of silk, and braided thereupon  
All the devices blazon'd on the shield  
In their own tinct, and added, of her  
wit, <sup>10</sup>  
A border fantasy of branch and flower,  
And yellow-throated nestling in the  
nest.  
Nor rested thus content, but day by  
day,  
Leaving her household and good fa-  
ther, climb'd  
That eastern tower, and entering  
barr'd her door,  
Strip'd off the case, and read the naked  
shield,

Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his  
arms,  
Now made a pretty history to herself  
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,  
And every scratch a lance had made  
upon it, <sup>20</sup>  
Conjecturing when and where: this  
cut is fresh,  
That ten years back; this dealt him  
at Caerlyle,  
That at Caerleon — this at Camelot —  
And ah, God's mercy, what a stroke  
was there!  
And here a thrust that might have  
kill'd, but God  
Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his  
enemy down,  
And saved him: so she lived in fan-  
tasy.

How came the lily maid by that  
good shield  
Of Lancelot, she that knew not even  
his name?  
He left it with her, when he rode to  
tilt <sup>30</sup>  
For the great diamond in the diamond  
jousts,  
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by  
that name  
Had named them, since a diamond  
was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they  
crown'd him king,  
Roving the trackless realms of Lyon-  
nesse,  
Had found a glen, gray boulder and  
black tarn.  
A horror lived about the tarn, and  
clave  
Like its own mists to all the mountain  
side;  
For here two brothers, one a king,  
had met  
And fought together, but their names  
were lost; <sup>40</sup>  
And each had slain his brother at a  
blow;  
And down they fell and made the  
glen abhorrd.  
And there they lay till all their bones  
were bleach'd,  
And lichen'd into color with the crags.  
And he that once was king had on a  
crown

Of diamonds, one in front and four  
 aside.  
 And Arthur came, and laboring up  
 the pass,  
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares  
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton,  
 and the skull  
 Brake from the nape, and from the  
 skull the crown<sup>50</sup>  
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its  
 rims  
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the  
 tarn.  
 And down the shingly scaur he  
 plunged, and caught,  
 And set it on his head, and in his heart  
 Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise  
 shalt be king.'

Thereafter, when a king, he had  
 the gems  
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd  
 them to his knights  
 Saying: 'These jewels, whereupon I  
 chanced  
 Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the  
 King's—  
 For public use. Henceforward let  
 there be,<sup>60</sup>  
 Once every year, a joust for one of  
 these;  
 For so by nine years' proof we needs  
 must learn  
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves  
 shall grow  
 In use of arms and manhood, till we  
 drive  
 The heathen, who, some say, shall  
 rule the land  
 Hereafter, which God hinder!' Thus  
 he spoke.  
 And eight years past, eight jousts  
 had been, and still  
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of the  
 year,  
 With purpose to present them to the  
 Queen  
 When all were won; but, meaning all  
 at once<sup>70</sup>  
 To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
 Worth half her realm, had never  
 spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and  
 the last

And largest, Arthur, holding then his  
 court  
 Hard on the river nigh the place  
 which now  
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a  
 joust  
 At Camelot, and when the time drew  
 nigh  
 Spake—for she had been sick—to  
 Guinevere:  
 'Are you so sick, my Queen, you can-  
 not move  
 To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,'  
 she said, 'ye know it.'<sup>80</sup>  
 'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd,  
 'the great deeds  
 Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the  
 lists,  
 A sight ye love to look on.' And the  
 Queen  
 Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt lan-  
 guidly  
 On Lancelot, where he stood beside  
 the King.  
 He, thinking that he read her mean-  
 ing there,  
 'Stay with me, I am sick; my love  
 is more  
 Than many diamonds,' yielded; and  
 a heart  
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the  
 Queen—  
 However much he yearn'd to make  
 complete<sup>90</sup>  
 The tale of diamonds for his destined  
 boon—  
 Urged him to speak against the truth,  
 and say,  
 'Sir King, mine ancient wound is  
 hardly whole,  
 And lets me from the saddle;' and  
 the King  
 Glanced first at him, then her, and  
 went his way.  
 No sooner gone than suddenly she  
 began:

'To blamê, my lord Sir Lancelot,  
 much to blame!  
 Why go ye not to these fair jousts?  
 the knights  
 Are half of them our enemies, and the  
 crowd  
 Will murmur, "Lo the shameless  
 ones, who take<sup>100</sup>

Their pastime now the trustful King  
 is gone ! ” ”  
 Then Lancelot, vexed at having lied in  
 vain :  
 ‘ Are ye so wise ? ye were not once so  
 wise,  
 My Queen, that summer when ye  
 loved me first.  
 Then of the crowd ye took no more  
 account  
 Than of the myriad cricket of the  
 mead,  
 When its own voice clings to each  
 blade of grass,  
 And every voice is nothing. As to  
 knights,  
 Them surely can I silence with all  
 ease.  
 But now my loyal worship is allow’d  
 Of all men ; many a bard, without  
 offence, <sup>111</sup>  
 Has link’d our names together in his  
 lay,  
 Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guine-  
 vere,  
 The pearl of beauty ; and our knights  
 at feast  
 Have pledged us in this union, while  
 the King  
 Would listen smiling. How then ? is  
 there more ?  
 Has Arthur spoken aught ? or would  
 yourself,  
 Now weary of my service and devoir,  
 Henceforth be truer to your faultless  
 lord ? ’

She broke into a little scornful  
 laugh : <sup>120</sup>  
 ‘ Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the fault-  
 less King,  
 That passionate perfection, my good  
 lord —  
 But who can gaze upon the sun in  
 heaven ?  
 He never spake word of reproach to  
 me,  
 He never had a glimpse of mine un-  
 truth,  
 He cares not for me. Only here to-  
 day  
 There gleamed a vague suspicion in  
 his eyes ;  
 Some meddling rogue has tamper’d  
 with him — else  
 Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,

And swearing men to vows impossi-  
 ble,  
 To make them like himself ; but,  
 friend, to me <sup>131</sup>  
 He is all fault who hath no fault at  
 all.  
 For who loves me must have a touch  
 of earth ;  
 The low sun makes the color. I am  
 yours,  
 Not Arthur’s, as ye know, save by the  
 bond.  
 And therefore hear my words : go to  
 the jousts :  
 The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break  
 our dream  
 When sweetest ; and the vermin  
 voices here  
 May buzz so loud — we scorn them,  
 but they sting.’

Then answer’d Lancelot, the chief  
 of knights : <sup>140</sup>  
 ‘ And with what face, after my pre-  
 text made,  
 Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I  
 Before a king who honors his own  
 word  
 As if it were his God’s ? ’

‘ Yea,’ said the Queen,  
 ‘ A moral child without the craft to  
 rule,  
 Else had he not lost me ; but listen to  
 me,  
 If I must find you wit. We hear it  
 said  
 That men go down before your spear  
 at a touch,  
 But knowing you are Lancelot ; your  
 great name,  
 This conquers. Hide it therefore ;  
 go unknown. <sup>150</sup>  
 Win ! by this kiss you will ; and our  
 true King  
 Will then allow your pretext, O my  
 knight,  
 As all for glory ; for to speak him  
 true,  
 Ye know right well, how meek soe’er  
 he seem,  
 No keener hunter after glory breathes.  
 He loves it in his knights more than  
 himself ;  
 They prove to him his work. Win  
 and return.’



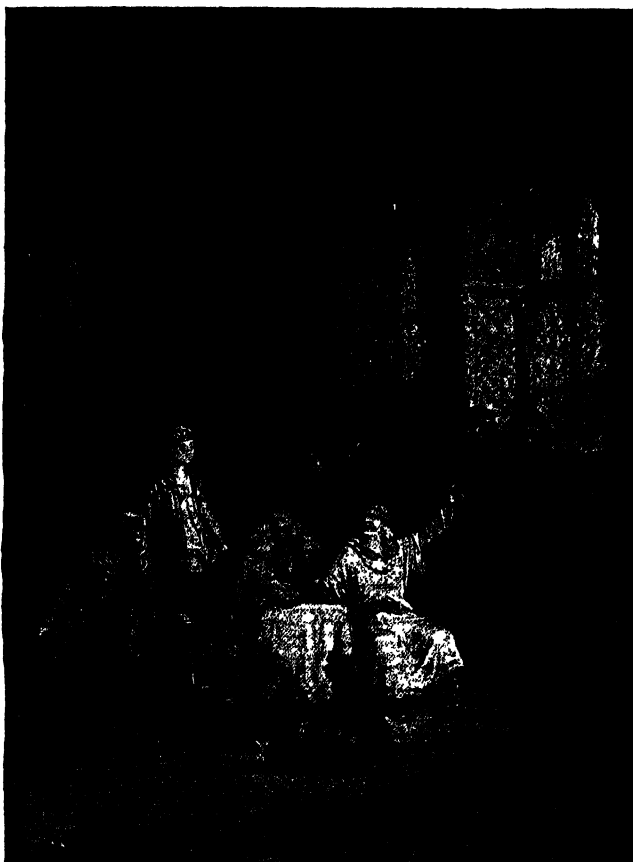
Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,  
 Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,  
 He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,<sup>160</sup>  
 Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,  
 And there among the solitary downs,  
 Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;  
 Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,  
 That all in loops and links among the dales  
 Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
 Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.  
 Thither he made, and blew the gate-way horn.  
 Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,  
 Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.  
 And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;<sup>171</sup>  
 And issuing found the Lord of Astolat  
 With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,  
 Moving to meet him in the castle court;  
 And close behind them stept the lily-maid  
 Elaine, his daughter; mother of the house  
 There was not. Some light jest among them rose  
 With laughter dying down as the great knight  
 Approach'd them; then the Lord of Astolat:  
 'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name'<sup>180</sup>  
 Livest between the lips? for by thy state  
 And presence I might guess thee chief of those,  
 After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls,  
 Him have I seen; the rest, his Table Round,  
 Known as they are, to me they are unknown.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:  
 'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,

What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.  
 But since I go to joust as one unknown  
 At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not;<sup>190</sup>  
 Hereafter ye shall know me — and the shield —  
 I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
 Blank, or at least with some device not mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat:  
 'Here is Torre's:  
 Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre,  
 And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.  
 His ye can have.' Then added plain Sir Torre,  
 'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it.'  
 Here laugh'd the father saying: 'Fie, Sir Churl,  
 Is that an answer for a noble knight? Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,<sup>201</sup>  
 He is so full of lustihood, he will ride, Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,  
 And set it in this damsel's golden hair,  
 To make her thrice as wilful as before.'

'Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not  
 Before this noble knight,' said young Lavaine,  
 'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre,  
 He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go;  
 A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt<sup>210</sup>  
 That some one put this diamond in her hand,  
 And that it was too slippery to be held,  
 And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,  
 The castle-well, belike; and then I said  
 That if I went and if I fought and won it —  
 But all was jest and joke among ourselves —  
 Then must she keep it safer. All was jest.



'The Illy maid Elaine . . .  
Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments'

But, father, give me leave, an if he  
will,  
To ride to Camelot with this noble  
knight.  
Win shall I not, but do my best to  
win;  
Young as I am, yet would I do my  
best.' 221

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd  
Lancelot.

Smiling a moment, 'with your fel-  
lowship  
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost  
myself,  
Then were I glad of you as guide and  
friend:  
And you shall win this diamond, — as  
I hear,  
It is a fair large diamond, — if ye  
may,  
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will'

'A fair large diamond,' added plain  
 Sir Torre,  
 'Such be for queens, and not for simple maids.'<sup>230</sup>  
 Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,  
 Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,  
 Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement  
 Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,  
 Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:  
 'If what is fair be but for what is fair,  
 And only queens are to be counted so,  
 Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid  
 Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,  
 Not violating the bond of like to like.'

He spoke and ceased; the lily maid Elaine,<sup>241</sup>  
 Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,  
 Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments.  
 The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,  
 In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
 Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.  
 Another sinning on such heights with one,  
 The flower of all the west and all the world,  
 Had been the sleeker for it; but in him  
 His mood was often like a fiend, and rose<sup>250</sup>  
 And drove him into wastes and solitudes  
 For agony, who was yet a living soul.  
 Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man  
 That ever among ladies ate in hall,  
 And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.  
 However marr'd, of more than twice her years,  
 Seam'd with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,  
 And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes  
 And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,<sup>260</sup>  
 Loyed of the loveliest, into that rude hall  
 Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain  
 Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,  
 But kindly man moving among his kind;  
 Whom they with meats and vintage of their best  
 And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.  
 And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,  
 And ever well and readily answer'd he;  
 But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,  
 Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,<sup>270</sup>  
 Heard from the baron that, ten years before,  
 The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.  
 'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design  
 Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;  
 But I, my sons, and little daughter fled  
 From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods  
 By the great river in a boatman's hut.  
 Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke  
 The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

'O, there, great lord, doubtless,' Laine said, rapt<sup>280</sup>  
 By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth  
 Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have fought.  
 O, tell us—for we live apart—you know  
 Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And Lancelot spoke  
 And answer'd him at full, as having been  
 With Arthur in the fight which all day long  
 Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;  
 And in the four loud battles by the shore

Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the  
 war  
 That thunder'd in and out the gloomy  
 skirts 290  
 Of Celidon the forest; and again  
 By Castle Gurnion, where the glorious  
 King  
 Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's  
 Head,  
 Carved of one emerald centred in a sun  
 Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he  
 breathed;  
 And at Caerleon had he help'd his  
 lord,  
 When the strong neighings of the wild  
 White Horse  
 Set every gilded parapet shuddering;  
 And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,  
 And down the waste sand-shores of  
 Trath Teroit, 300  
 Where many a heathen fell, 'and on  
 the mount  
 Of Badon I myself beheld the King  
 Charge at the head of all his Table  
 Round,  
 And all his legions crying Christ and  
 him,  
 And break them; and I saw him,  
 after, stand  
 High on a heap of slain, from spur to  
 plume  
 Red as the rising sun with heathen  
 blood,  
 And seeing me, with a great voice he  
 cried,  
 'They are broken, they are broken!'  
 for the King,  
 However mild he seems at home, nor  
 cares 310  
 For triumph in our mimic wars, the  
 jousts —  
 For if his own knight casts him down,  
 he laughs,  
 Saying his knights are better men than  
 he —  
 Yet in this heathen war the fire of  
 God  
 Fills him. I never saw his like; there  
 lives  
 No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,  
 Low to her own heart said the lily  
 maid,  
 'Save your great self, fair lord;' and  
 when he fell

From talk of war to traits of pleasan  
 try —  
 Being mirthful he, but in a stately  
 kind — 320  
 She still took note that when the liv-  
 ing smile  
 Died from his lips, across him came a  
 cloud  
 Of melancholy severe, from which  
 again,  
 Whenever in her hovering to and  
 fro  
 The lily maid had striven to make him  
 cheer,  
 There brake a sudden-beaming tender-  
 ness  
 Of manners and of nature; and she  
 thought  
 That all was nature, all, perchance,  
 for her.  
 And all night long his face before her  
 lived,  
 As when a painter, poring on a face, 330  
 Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the  
 man  
 Behind it, and so paints him that his  
 face,  
 The shape and color of a mind and life,  
 Lives for his children, ever at its best  
 And fullest; so the face before her  
 lived,  
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence,  
 full  
 Of noble things, and held her from  
 her sleep,  
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the  
 thought  
 She needs must bid farewell to sweet  
 Lavaine.  
 First as in fear, step after step, she  
 stole 340  
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating.  
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in  
 the court,  
 'This shield, my friend, where is it?'  
 and Lavaine  
 Past inward, as she came from out the  
 tower.  
 There to his proud horse Lancelot  
 turn'd, and smooth'd  
 The glossy shoulder, humming to  
 himself.  
 Half-envious of the flattering hand,  
 she drew  
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and,  
 more amazed

Than if seven men had set upon him,  
     saw  
 The maiden standing in the dewy  
     light. 350  
 He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.  
 Then came on him a sort of sacred  
     fear,  
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she  
     stood  
 Rapt on his face as if it were a  
     god's.  
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire  
 That he should wear her favor at the  
     tilt.  
 She braved a riotous heart in asking  
     for it.  
 'Fair lord, whose name I know not—  
     noble it is,  
 I well believe, the noblest—will you  
     wear  
 My favor at this tourney?' 'Nay,'  
     said he, 360  
 'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn  
 Favor of any lady in the lists.  
 Such is my wont, as those who know  
     me know.'  
 'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in  
     wearing mine  
 Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble  
     lord,  
 That those who know should know  
     you.' And he turn'd  
 Her counsel up and down within his  
     mind,  
 And found it true, and answer'd:  
     'True, my child.  
 Well, I will wear it; fetch it out to  
     me.  
 What is it?' and she told him, 'A red  
     sleeve 370  
 Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it.  
 Then he bound  
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile  
 Saying, 'I never yet have done so  
     much  
 For any maiden living,' and the blood  
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with  
     delight;  
 But left her all the paler when Lavaine  
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd  
     shield,  
 His brother's, which he gave to Lance  
     lot,  
 Who parted with his own to fair  
 Elaine:

'Do me this grace, my child, to have  
     my shield 380  
 In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to  
     me,'  
 She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am  
     your squire!'  
 Whereat Lavaine said laughing: 'Lily  
     maid,  
 For fear our people call you lily maid  
 In earnest, let me bring your color  
     back;  
 Once, twice, and thrice. Now get  
     you hence to bed;'  
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his  
     own hand,  
 And thus they moved away. She  
     staid a minute,  
 Then made a sudden step to the gate,  
     and there—  
 Her bright hair blown about the  
     serious face 390  
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's  
     kiss—  
 Paused by the gateway, standing near  
     the shield  
 In silence, while she watch'd their  
     arms far-off  
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the  
     downs,  
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and  
     took the shield,  
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.  
  
 Meanwhile the new companions  
     past away  
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless  
     downs,  
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there  
     lived a knight  
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty  
     years 400  
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and  
     pray'd,  
 And ever laboring had scoop'd himself  
 In the white rock a chapel and a  
     hall  
 On massive columns, like a shore-cliff  
     cave,  
 And cells and chambers. All were  
     fair and dry;  
 The green light from the meadows  
     underneath  
 Struck up and lived along the milky  
     roofs;  
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-  
     trees

And poplars made a noise of falling  
showers.  
And thither wending there that night  
they bode. <sup>410</sup>

But when the next day broke from  
underground,  
And shot red fire and shadows thro'  
the cave,  
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and  
rode away.  
Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but  
hold my name  
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the  
Lake,'  
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant rever-  
ence,  
Dearer to true young hearts than their  
own praise,  
But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it  
indeed ?'  
And after muttering, 'The great  
Lancelot,'  
At last he got his breath and answer'd :  
'One, <sup>420</sup>  
One have I seen — that other, our liege  
lord,  
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King  
of kings,  
Of whom the people talk mysteri-  
ously,  
He will be there — then were I stricken  
blind  
That minute, I might say that I had  
seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when they  
reach'd the lists  
By Camelot in the meadow, let his  
eyes  
Run thro' the peopled gallery which  
half round  
Lay like a rainbow fallen upon the  
grass,  
Until they found the clear-faced King,  
who sat <sup>430</sup>  
Robed in red samite, easily to be  
known,  
Since to his crown the golden dragon  
clung,  
And down his robe the dragon writhed  
in gold,  
And from the carven-work behind him  
crept  
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to  
make

Arms for his chair, while all the rest  
of them  
Thro' knots and loops and folds in-  
numerable  
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they  
found  
The new design wherein they lost  
themselves,  
Yet with all ease, so tender was the  
work ; <sup>440</sup>  
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,  
Blazed the last diamond of the name-  
less king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young La  
vaine and said :  
'Me you call great ; mine is the firmer  
seat,  
The truer lance ; but there is many a  
youth  
Now crescent, who will come to all I  
am  
And overcome it ; and in me there  
dwells  
No greatness, save it be some far-off  
touch  
Of greatness to know well I am not  
great.  
There is the man.' And Lavaine  
gaped upon him <sup>450</sup>  
As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
The trumpets blew ; and then did  
either side,  
They that assail'd, and they that held  
the lists,  
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly  
move,  
Meet in the midst, and there so fu-  
riously  
Shock that a man far-off might well  
perceive,  
If any man that day were left afield,  
The hard earth shake, and a low  
thunder of arms.  
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw  
Which were the weaker ; then he  
hurl'd into it <sup>460</sup>  
Against the stronger. Little need to  
speak  
Of Lancelot in his glory ! King, duke,  
earl,  
Count, baron — whom he smote, he  
overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's  
kith and kin,

Ranged with the Table Round that  
held the lists,  
Strong men, and wrathful that a  
stranger knight  
Should do and almost overdo the deeds  
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other,  
'Lo!  
What is he? I do not mean the force  
alone—

The grace and versatility of the man!  
Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has Lan-  
celot worn <sup>471</sup>

Favor of any lady in the lists?  
Not such his wont, as we that know  
him know.'

'How then? who then?' a fury seized  
them all,

A fiery family passion for the name  
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with  
theirs.

They couch'd their spears and prick'd  
their steeds, and thus,

Their plumes driven backward by the  
wind they made

In moving, all together down upon  
him

Bare, as a wild wave in the wide  
North Sea, <sup>480</sup>

Green-glimmering toward the summit,  
bears, with all

Its stormy crests that smoke against  
the skies,

Down on a bark, and overbears the  
bark

And him that helms it; so they over-  
bore

Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a  
spear

Down-glancing lamed the charger,  
and a spear

Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and  
the head

Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt  
and remain'd.

Then Sir Lorraine did well and wor-  
shipfully.

He bore a knight of old repute to the  
earth, <sup>490</sup>

And brought his horse to Lancelot  
where he lay.

He up the side, sweating with agony,  
got,

But thought to do while he might yet  
endure,

And being lustily holpen by the rest,

His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle  
To those he fought with,—drave his  
kith and kin,

And all the Table Round that held  
the lists,

Back to the barrier; then the trumpets  
blew

Proclaiming his the prize who wore  
the sleeve

Of scarlet and the pearls; and all the  
knights, <sup>500</sup>

His party, cried, 'Advance and take  
thy prize

The diamond;' but he answer'd:  
'Diamond me

No diamonds! for God's love, a little  
air!

Prize me no prizes, for my prize is  
death!

Hence will I, and I charge you, fol-  
low me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly  
from the field

With young Lorraine into the poplar  
grove.

There from his charger down he slid,  
and sat,

Gasping to Sir Lorraine, 'Draw the  
lance-head.'

'Ah, my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,'  
said Lorraine, <sup>510</sup>

'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'  
But he, 'I die already with it; draw—

Draw,'—and Lorraine drew, and Sir  
Lancelot gave

A marvellous great shriek and ghastly  
groan,

And half his blood burst forth, and  
down he sank

For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd  
away.

Then came the hermit out and bare  
him in,

There stanch'd his wound; and there,  
in daily doubt

Whether to live or die, for many a  
week

Hid from the wild world's rumor by  
the grove <sup>520</sup>

Of poplars with their noise of falling  
showers,

And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled  
the lists,

His party, knights of utmost North  
and West,  
Lords of waste marshes, kings of desolate isles,  
Came round their great Pendragon,  
saying to him,  
'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we  
won the day,  
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath  
left his prize  
Untaken, crying that his prize is  
death.  
'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that  
such an one, 530  
So great a knight as we have seen to-  
day —  
He seem'd to me another Lancelot —  
Yea, twenty times I thought him  
Lancelot —  
He must not pass uncared for. Where-  
fore rise,  
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the  
knight.  
Wounded and wearied, needs must he  
be near.  
I charge you that you get at once to  
horse.  
And, knights and kings, there breathes  
not one of you  
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly  
given;  
His prowess was too wondrous. We  
will do him 540  
No customary honor; since the knight  
Came not to us, of us to claim the  
prize,  
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and  
take  
This diamond, and deliver it, and re-  
turn,  
And bring us where he is, and how  
he fares,  
And cease not from your quest until  
ye find'

So saying, from the carven flower  
above,  
To which it made a restless heart, he  
took  
And gave the diamond. Then from  
where he sat  
At Arthur's right, with smiling face  
arose, 550  
With smiling face and frowning heart,  
a prince

In the mid might and flourish of his  
May,  
Gawain, surnamed the Courteous, fair  
and strong,  
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and  
Geraint,  
And Gareth, a good knight, but there-  
withal  
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of  
Lot,  
Nor often loyal to his word, and  
now  
Wroth that the King's command to  
sally forth  
In quest of whom he knew not, made  
him leave  
The banquet and concourse of knights  
and kings. 560

So all in wrath he got to horse and  
went;  
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in  
mood,  
Past, thinking, 'Is it Lancelot who  
hath come  
Despite the wound he spake of, all  
for gain  
Of glory, and hath added wound to  
wound,  
And ridden away to die?' So fear'd  
the King,  
And, after two days' tarriance there,  
return'd.  
Then when he saw the Queen, em-  
bracing ask'd,  
'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay,  
lord,' she said.  
'And where is Lancelot?' Then the  
Queen amazed, 570  
'Was he not with you? won he not  
your prize?'  
'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why, that  
like was he.'  
And when the King demanded how  
she knew,  
Said: 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted  
from us  
Than Lancelot told me of a common  
talk  
That men went down before his spear  
at a touch,  
But knowing he was Lancelot; his  
great name  
Conquer'd; and therefore would he  
hide his name



From all men, even the King, and to  
 this end  
 Had made the pretext of a hindering  
 wound, <sup>580</sup>  
 That he might joust unknown of all,  
 and learn  
 If his old prowess were in aught de-  
 cay'd;  
 And added, "Our true Arthur, when  
 he learns,  
 Will well allow my pretext, as for  
 gain  
 Of purer glory."

Then replied the King:  
 'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it  
 been,  
 In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
 To have trusted me as he hath trusted  
 thee.  
 Surely his King and most familiar  
 friend  
 Might well have kept his secret.  
 True, indeed, <sup>590</sup>  
 Albeit I know my knights fantasti-  
 cal,  
 So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
 Must needs have moved my laughter;  
 now remains  
 But little cause for laughter. His own  
 kin —  
 Ill news, my Queen, for all who love  
 him, this! —  
 His kith and kin, not knowing, set  
 upon him;  
 So that he went sore wounded from  
 the field.  
 Yet good news too; for goodly hopes  
 are mine  
 That Lancelot is no more a lonely  
 heart.  
 He wore, against his wont, upon his  
 helm <sup>600</sup>  
 A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with  
 great pearls,  
 Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Yea, lord,' she said,  
 'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying  
 that, she choked,  
 And sharply turn'd about to hide her  
 face,  
 Past to her chamber, and there flung  
 herself  
 Down on the great King's couch, and  
 writhed upon it,

And clench'd her fingers till they bit  
 the palm,  
 And shriek'd out 'Traitor!' to the  
 unhearing wall,  
 Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose  
 again,  
 And moved about her palace, proud  
 and pale. <sup>610</sup>

Gawain the while thro' all the region  
 round  
 Rode with his diamond, wearied of the  
 quest,  
 Touch'd at all points except the pop-  
 lar grove,  
 And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat;  
 Whom glittering in enamell'd arms  
 the maid  
 Glanced at, and cried, 'What news  
 from Camelot, lord?  
 What of the knight with the red  
 sleeve?' 'He won.'  
 'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted  
 from the jousts  
 Hurt in the side;' whereat she caught  
 her breath.  
 Thro' her own side she felt the sharp  
 lance go. <sup>620</sup>  
 Thereon she smote her hand; well-  
 nigh she swoon'd.  
 And, while he gazed wonderingly at  
 her, came  
 The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the  
 prince  
 Reported who he was, and on what  
 quest  
 Sent, that he bore the prize and could  
 not find  
 The victor, but had ridden a random  
 round  
 To seek him, and had wearied of the  
 search.  
 To whom the Lord of Astolat: 'Bide  
 with us,  
 And ride no more at random, noble  
 prince!  
 Here was the knight, and here he left  
 a shield; <sup>630</sup>  
 This will he send or come for. Fur-  
 thermore  
 Our son is with him; we shall hear  
 anon,  
 Needs must we hear.' To this the  
 courteous prince  
 Accorded with his wonted courtesy,  
 Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it.

And staid; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine;  
Where could be found face daintier? then her shape  
From forehead down to foot, perfect — again  
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd:  
'Well — if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!' <sup>640</sup>  
And oft they met among the garden yews,  
And there he set himself to play upon her  
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height  
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,  
Sighs, and low smiles, and golden eloquence  
And amorous adulation, till the maid  
Rebell'd against it, saying to him:  
'Prince,  
O loyal nephew of our noble King,  
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,  
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your King, <sup>650</sup>  
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove  
No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and went  
To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine head,' said he,  
'I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,  
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;  
But an ye will it let me see the shield.'  
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw  
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,  
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd: <sup>660</sup>  
'Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true man!'  
'And right was I,' she answer'd merrily, 'I,  
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all.'  
'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain, 'that you love  
This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye know it!

Speak therefore: shall I waste myself in vain?'  
Full simple was her answer: 'What know I?  
My brethren have been all my fellowship;  
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,  
Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd, <sup>670</sup>  
Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so myself —  
I know not if I know what true love is,  
But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
I know there is none other I can love.'  
'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye love him well,  
But would not, knew ye what all others know,  
And whom he loves.' 'So be it,' cried Elaine,  
And lifted her fair face and moved away;  
But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a little!  
One golden minute's grace! he wore your sleeve. <sup>680</sup>  
Would he break faith with one I may not name?  
Must our true man change like a leaf at last?  
Nay — like enow. Why then, far be it from me  
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!  
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well  
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave  
My quest with you; the diamond also — here!  
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;  
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it  
From your own hand; and whether, he love or not, <sup>690</sup>  
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well  
A thousand times! — a thousand times farewell!  
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two

May meet at court hereafter ! there, I  
 think,  
 So ye will learn the courtesies of the  
 court,  
 We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,  
 And slightly kiss'd the hand to which  
 he gave,  
 The diamond, and all wearied of the  
 quest  
 Leapt on his horse, and carolling as  
 he went  
 A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past ; there  
 told the King  
 What the King knew, ' Sir Lancelot  
 is the knight.'  
 And added, ' Sire, my liege, so much  
 I learnt,  
 But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all  
 round  
 The region ; but I lighted on the maid  
 Whose sleeve he wore. She loves  
 him ; and to her,  
 Deeming our courtesy is the truest  
 law,  
 I gave the diamond. She will render  
 it ;  
 For by mine head she knows his hid-  
 ing-place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd,  
 and replied,  
 Too courteous truly ! ye shall go no  
 more  
 On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget  
 Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but  
 all in awe,  
 For twenty strokes of the blood, with-  
 out a word,  
 Linger'd that other, staring after him ;  
 Then shook his hair, strode off, and  
 buzz'd abroad  
 About the maid of Astolat, and her  
 love.  
 All ears were prick'd at once, all  
 tongues were loosed :  
 ' The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,  
 Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.'  
 Some read the King's face, some the  
 Queen's, and all

Had marvel what the maid might be,  
 but most  
 Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old  
 dame  
 Came suddenly on the Queen with the  
 sharp news.  
 She, that had heard the noise of it  
 before,  
 But sorrowing Lancelot should have  
 stoop'd so low,  
 Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tran-  
 quillity.  
 So ran the tale like fire about the court,  
 Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' won-  
 der flared ;  
 Till even the knights at banquet twice  
 or thrice  
 Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the  
 Queen,  
 And pledging Lancelot and the lily  
 maid  
 Smiled at each other, while the Queen,  
 who sat  
 With lips severely placid, felt the knot  
 Climb in her throat, and with her feet  
 unseen  
 Crush'd the wild passion out against  
 the floor  
 Beneath the banquet, where the meats  
 became  
 As wormwood and she hated all who  
 pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,  
 Her guiltless rival, she that ever  
 kept  
 The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her  
 heart,  
 Crept to her father, while he mused  
 alone,  
 Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face  
 and said :  
 ' Father, you call me wilful, and the  
 fault  
 Is yours who let me have my will, and  
 now,  
 Sweet father, will you let me lose my  
 wits ?'  
 ' Nay,' said he, ' surely.' ' Wherefore,  
 let me hence,'  
 She answer'd, ' and find out our dear  
 Lavaine.'  
 ' Ye will not lose your wits for dear  
 Lavaine.  
 Bide,' answer'd he : ' we needs must  
 hear anon

Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she  
 said,  
 'And of that other, for I needs must  
 hence  
 And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,  
 And with mine own hand give his dia-  
 mond to him,  
 Lest I be found as faithless in the  
 quest  
 As yon proud prince who left the  
 quest to me.  
 Sweet father, I behold him in my  
 dreams  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of him-  
 self,  
 Death-pale, for the lack of gentle  
 maiden's aid. 760  
 The gentler-born the maiden, the more  
 bound,  
 My father, to be sweet and serviceable  
 To noble knights in sickness, as ye  
 know,  
 When these have worn their tokens.  
 Let me hence,  
 I pray you.' Then her father nodding  
 said:  
 'Ay, ay, the diamond. Wit ye well,  
 my child,  
 Right fain were I to learn this knight  
 were whole,  
 Being our greatest. Yea, and you  
 must give it —  
 And sure I think this fruit is hung too  
 high  
 For any mouth to gape for save a  
 queen's — 770  
 Nay, I mean nothing; so then, get you  
 gone,  
 Being so very wilful you must go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slept  
 away,  
 And while she made her ready for her  
 ride  
 Her father's latest word humm'd in  
 her ear,  
 'Being so very wilful you must go,'  
 And changed itself and echo'd in her  
 heart,  
 'Being so very wilful you must die.'  
 But she was happy enough and shook  
 it off,  
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes  
 at us; 780  
 And in her heart she answer'd it and  
 said,

'What matter, so I help him back to  
 life?'  
 Then far away with good Sir Torre  
 for guide  
 Rode o'er the long backs of the bush-  
 less downs  
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates  
 Came on her brother with a happy face  
 Making a roan horse caper and curvet  
 For pleasure all about a field of flow-  
 ers;  
 Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she  
 cried, 'Lavaine,  
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?'  
 He amazed, 790  
 'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir  
 Lancelot!  
 How know ye my lord's name is Lan-  
 celot?'  
 But when the maid had told him all  
 her tale,  
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in  
 his moods  
 Left them, and under the strange-  
 statued gate,  
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd  
 mystically,  
 Past up the still rich city to his kin,  
 His own far blood, which dwelt at  
 Camelot;  
 And her, Lavaine across the poplar  
 grove  
 Led to the caves. There first she saw  
 the casque 800  
 Of Lancelot on the wall; her scarlet  
 sleeve,  
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the  
 pearls away,  
 Stream'd from it still; and in her  
 heart she laugh'd,  
 Because he had not loosed it from his  
 helm,  
 But meant once more perchance to  
 tourney in it.  
 And when they gain'd the cell wherein  
 he slept,  
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty  
 hands  
 Lay naked on the wolf-skin, and a  
 dream  
 Of dragging down his enemy made  
 them move.  
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek,  
 unshorn, 810  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of him-  
 self,

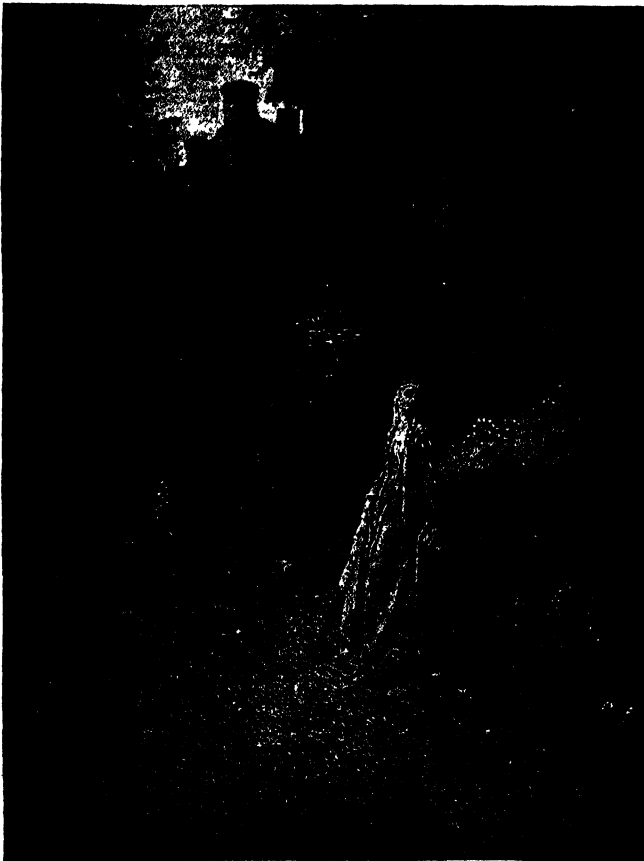
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.  
 The sound not wonted in a place so  
 still  
 Woke the sick knight, and while he  
 roll'd his eyes  
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to  
 him, saying,  
 'Your prize the diamond sent you by  
 the King.'  
 His eyes glisten'd; she fancied, 'Is it  
 for me?'  
 And when the maid had told him all  
 the tale  
 Of king and prince, the diamond sent,  
 the quest  
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she  
 knelt 820  
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,  
 And laid the diamond in his open hand.  
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the  
 child  
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd  
 her face.  
 At once she slipt like water to the floor.  
 'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath wear-  
 ed you.  
 Rest must you have.' 'No rest for me,'  
 she said;  
 'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at  
 rest.'  
 What might she mean by that? his  
 large black eyes,  
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt  
 upon her, 830  
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed  
 itself  
 In the heart's colors on her simple face;  
 And Lancelot look'd and was per-  
 plext in mind,  
 And being weak in body said no more,  
 But did not love the color; woman's  
 love,  
 Save one, he not regarded, and so  
 turn'd  
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he  
 slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro'  
 the fields,  
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculp-  
 tured gates  
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin;  
 There bode the night, but woke with  
 dawn, and past 841  
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the  
 fields,

Thence to the cave. So day by day  
 she past  
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro  
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,  
 And likewise many a night; and Lan-  
 celot  
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little  
 hurt  
 Whereof he should be quickly whole,  
 at times  
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony,  
 seem  
 Uncourteous, even he. But the meek  
 maid 850  
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to  
 him  
 Meeker than any child to a rough  
 nurse,  
 Milder than any mother to a sick  
 child,  
 And never woman yet, since man's  
 first fall,  
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep  
 love  
 Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in  
 all  
 The simples and the science of that  
 time,  
 Told him that her fine care had saved  
 his life.  
 And the sick man forgot her simple  
 blush,  
 Would call her friend and sister, sweet  
 Elaine, 860  
 Would listen for her coming and re-  
 gret  
 Her parting step, and held her ten-  
 derly,  
 And loved her with all love except  
 the love  
 Of man and woman when they love  
 their best,  
 Closest and sweetest, and had died  
 the death  
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.  
 And peradventure had he seen her  
 first  
 She might have made this and that  
 other world  
 Another world for the sick man; but  
 now  
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd  
 him, 870  
 His honor rooted in dishonor stood,  
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely  
 true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-  
sickness made  
Full many a holy vow and pure re-  
solve.  
These, as but born of sickness, could  
not live;  
For when the blood ran lustier in him  
again,  
Full often the bright image of one  
face,  
Making a treacherous quiet in his  
heart,  
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.

Then if the maiden, while that ghostly  
grace<sup>880</sup>  
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he an-  
swer'd not,  
Or short and coldly, and she knew  
right well  
What the rough sickness meant, but  
what this meant  
She knew not, and the sorrow dimn'd  
her sight,  
And drave her ere her time across the  
fields  
Far into the rich city, where alone



'Day by day she past  
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro'

She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain! it cannot be.

He will not love me. How then? must I die?'

Then as a little helpless innocent bird,  
That has but one plain passage of few notes,

Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er <sup>890</sup>

For all an April morning, till the ear  
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid  
Went half the night repeating, 'Must I die?'

And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,

And found no ease in turning or in rest;  
And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd,  
'death or him,'

Again and like a burthen, 'Him or death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,

To Astolat returning rode the three.  
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self

In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,

She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought,

'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,

If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.'

And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid

That she should ask some goodly gift of him

For her own self or hers: 'and do not shun

To speak the wish most near to your true heart;

Such service have ye done me that I make

My will of yours, and prince and lord am I <sup>910</sup>

In mine own land, and what I will I can.'

Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,

But like a ghost without the power to speak.

And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,

And bode among them yet a little space

Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced

He found her in among the garden yews,

And said, 'Delay no longer, speak your wish,

Seeing I go to-day.' Then out she brake:

'Going? and we shall never see you more. <sup>920</sup>

And I must die for want of one bold word.'

'Speak; that I live to hear,' he said 'is yours.'

Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:

'I have gone mad. I love you; let me die.'

'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what is this?'

And innocently extending her white arms,

'Your love,' she said, 'your love—to be your wife.'

And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen to wed,

I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine;

But now there never will be wife of mine. <sup>930</sup>

'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be wife,

But to be with you still, to see your face,

To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world.'

And Lancelot answer'd: 'Nay, the world, the world,

All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart

To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue

To blare its own interpretation—nay,

Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,

And your good father's kindness.'

And she said, <sup>940</sup>  
'Not to be with you, not to see your face—

Alas for me then, my good days are done!'

'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times nay!

This is not love, but love's first flash in youth

Most common; yea, I know it of  
mine own self,  
And you yourself will smile at your  
own self  
Hereafter, when you yield your flower  
of life  
To one more fitly yours, not thrice  
your age.  
And then will I, for true you are and  
sweet  
Beyond mine old belief in woman-  
hood,  
More specially should your good <sup>950</sup>  
knight be poor,  
Endow you with broad land and ter-  
ritory  
Even to the half my realm beyond the  
seas,  
So that would make you happy; fur-  
thermore,  
Even to the death, as tho' ye were my  
blood,  
In all your quarrels will I be your  
knight.  
This will I do, dear damsel, for your  
sake,  
And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke  
She neither blush'd nor shook, but  
deathly-pale  
Stood grasping what was nearest, then  
replied, <sup>960</sup>  
'Of all this will I nothing;' and so fell,  
And thus they bore her swooning to  
her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those  
black walls of yew  
Their talk had pierced, her father:  
'Ay, a flash,  
I fear me, that will strike my blossom  
dead.  
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lance-  
lot.  
I pray you, use some rough discour-  
tesy  
To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,  
'That were against me; what I can I  
will;'  
And there that day remain'd, and  
toward even <sup>970</sup>  
Sent for his shield. Full meekly rose  
the maid,

Stript off the case, and gave the  
naked shield;  
Then, when she heard his horse upon  
the stones,  
Unclassing flung the casement back,  
and look'd  
Down on his helm, from which her  
sleeve had gone.  
And Lancelot knew the little clinking  
sound;  
And she by tact of love was well  
aware  
That Lancelot knew that she was look-  
ing at him.  
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved  
his hand,  
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode  
away. <sup>980</sup>  
This was the one discourtesy that he  
used.

So in her tower alone the maiden  
sat.  
His very shield was gone; only the  
case,  
Her own poor work, her empty labor,  
left.  
But still she heard him, still his pic-  
ture form'd  
And grew between her and the pic-  
tured wall.  
Then came her father, saying in low  
tones,  
'Have comfort,' whom she greeted  
quietly.  
Then came her brethren saying,  
'Peace to thee,  
Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd  
with all calm. <sup>990</sup>  
But when they left her to herself  
again,  
Death, like a friend's voice from a  
distant field  
Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd;  
the owls  
Wailing had power upon her, and she  
mixt  
Her fancies with the sorrow-rifted  
glooms  
Of evening and the moanings of the  
wind.

And in those days she made a little  
song,  
And call'd her song 'The Song of  
Love and Death.'



And sang it; sweetly could she make  
and sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in  
vain;  
And sweet is death who puts an end to  
pain.<sup>1000</sup>  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death  
must be.  
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.  
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to  
fade away;  
Sweet death, that seems to make us love-  
less clay;  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could  
be;  
I needs must follow death, who calls for  
me;  
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'<sup>1010</sup>

High with the last line scaled her  
voice, and this,  
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind  
That shook her tower, the brothers  
heard, and thought  
With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom  
of the house  
That ever shrieks before a death,' and  
call'd  
The father, and all three in hurry and  
fear  
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light  
of dawn  
Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let  
me die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we  
know,<sup>1020</sup>  
Repeating, till the word we know so  
well  
Becomes a wonder, and we know not  
why,  
So dwelt the father on her face, and  
thought,  
'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden  
fell,  
Then gave a languid hand to each,  
and lay,  
Speaking a still good-morrow with  
her eyes.  
At last she said: 'Sweet brothers,  
yester-night  
I seem'd a curious little maid again,

As happy as when we dwelt among  
the woods,

And when ye used to take me with  
the flood<sup>1030</sup>

Up the great river in the boatman's  
boat.

Only ye would not pass beyond the  
cape

That has the poplar on it; there ye fixt  
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.  
And yet I cried because ye would not  
pass

Beyond it, and far up the shining flood  
Until we found the palace of the King.  
And yet ye would not; but this night  
I dream'd

That I was all alone upon the flood,  
And then I said, "Now shall I have  
my will;"<sup>1040</sup>

And there I woke, but still the wish  
remain'd.

So let me hence that I may pass at last  
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,  
Until I find the palace of the King.

There will I enter in among them all,  
And no man there will dare to mock  
at me;

But there the fine Gawain will wonder  
at me,

And there the great Sir Lancelot muse  
at me;

Gawain, who bade a thousand fare-  
wells to me,

Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade  
me one.<sup>1050</sup>

And there the King will know me  
and my love,

And there the Queen herself will pity  
me,

And all the gentle court will welcome  
me,

And after my long voyage I shall rest!'

'Peace,' said her father, 'O my  
child, ye seem

Light-headed, for what force is yours  
to go

So far, being sick? and wherefore  
would ye look

On this proud fellow again, who scorns  
us all?'

Then the rough Torre began to  
heave and move,  
And bluster into stormy sobs and  
say:

'I never loved him; an I meet with him,  
I care not howsoever great he be,  
Then will I strike at him and strike him down.  
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,  
For this discomfort he hath done the house.'

To whom the gentle sister made reply:  
'Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,  
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault  
Not to love me than it is mine to love  
Him of all men who seems to me the highest.'

'Highest?' the father answer'd,  
echoing 'highest?' —  
He meant to break the passion in her — 'nay,  
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;  
But this I know, for all the people know it,  
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame,  
And she returns his love in open shame;  
If this be high, what is it to be low?'

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:  
'Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I  
For anger. These are slanders; never yet  
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.  
He makes no friend who never made a foe.  
But now it is my glory to have loved  
One peerless, without stain; so let me pass,  
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,  
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best  
And greatest, tho' my love had no return.  
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,  
Thanks, but you work against your own desire,  
For if I could believe the things you say  
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,

Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man  
Hither, and let me shrive me clean and die.'

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,  
She, with a face bright as for sin forgiven,  
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised  
A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd,  
'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?  
Then will I bear it gladly;' she replied,  
'For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,  
But I myself must bear it.' Then he wrote  
The letter she devised; which being writ  
And folded, 'O sweet father, tender and true,  
Deny me not,' she said — 'ye never yet  
Denied my fancies — this, however strange,  
My latest. Lay the letter in my hand  
A little ere I die, and close the hand  
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.  
And when the heat has gone from out my heart,  
Then take the little bed on which I died  
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's  
For richness, and me also like the Queen  
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.  
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier  
To take me to the river, and a barge  
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.  
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.  
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,  
And none of you can speak for me so well.  
And therefore let our dumb old man alone  
Go with me; he can steer and row, and he  
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.'

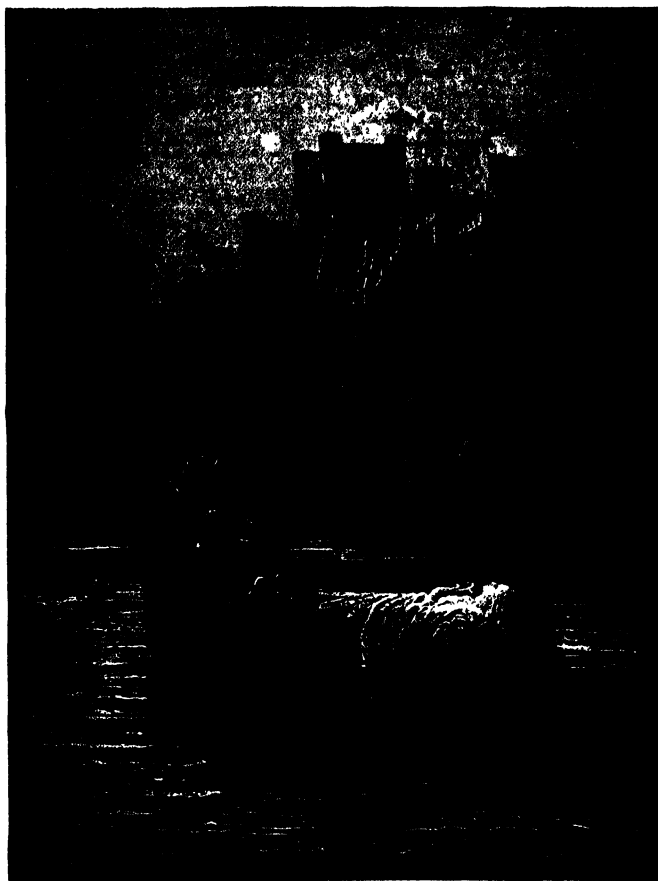
She ceased. Her father promised ;  
 whereupon  
 She grew so cheerful that they deem'd  
 her death  
 Was rather in the fantasy than the  
 blood.  
 But ten slow mornings past, and on  
 the eleventh  
 Her father laid the letter in her hand,  
 And closed the hand upon it, and she  
 died.  
 So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from  
 underground, <sup>1130</sup>  
 Then, those two brethren slowly with  
 bent brows  
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that  
 shone  
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon  
 the barge,  
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite,  
 lay.  
 There sat the lifelong creature of the  
 house,  
 Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his  
 face.  
 So those two brethren from the chariot  
 took  
 And on the black decks laid her in her  
 bed, <sup>1140</sup>  
 Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung  
 The silken case with braided blazon-  
 ings,  
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and say-  
 ing to her,  
 'Sister, farewell forever,' and again,  
 'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in  
 tears.  
 Then rose the dumb old servitor, and  
 the dead,  
 Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with  
 the flood —  
 In her right hand the lily, in her left  
 The letter — all her bright hair stream-  
 ing down —  
 And all the coverlid was cloth of  
 gold <sup>1150</sup>  
 Drawn to her waist, and she herself in  
 white  
 All but her face, and that clear-fea-  
 tured face  
 Was lovely, for she did not seem as  
 dead,

But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she  
 smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace  
 craved  
 Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
 The price of half a realm, his costly  
 gift,  
 Hard-won and hardly won with bruise  
 and blow,  
 With deaths of others, and almost his  
 own,  
 The nine-years-fought-for diamonds ;  
 for he saw <sup>1160</sup>  
 One of her house, and sent him to the  
 Queen  
 Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen  
 agreed  
 With such and so unmoved a majesty  
 She might have seem'd her statue, but  
 that he,  
 Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd  
 her feet  
 For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye  
 The shadow of some piece of pointed  
 lace,  
 In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the  
 walls,  
 And parted, laughing in his courtly  
 heart.

All in an oriel on the summerside, <sup>1170</sup>  
 Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward  
 the stream,  
 They met, and Lancelot kneeling  
 utter'd: 'Queen,  
 Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,  
 Take, what I had not won except for  
 you,  
 These jewels, and make me happy,  
 making them  
 An armlet for the roundest arm on  
 earth,  
 Or necklace for a neck to which the  
 swan's  
 Is tawnier than her cygnet's. These  
 are words ;  
 Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin  
 In speaking, yet O, grant my worship  
 of it <sup>1180</sup>  
 Words, as we grant grief tears. Such  
 sin in words  
 Perchance, we both can pardon ; but,  
 my Queen,  
 I hear of rumors flying thro' your  
 court.



'She did not seem as dead,  
But fast asleep'

Our bond, as not the bond of man and  
wife,  
Should have in it an absoluter trust  
To make up that defect : let rumors be.  
When did not rumors fly ? these, as I  
trust  
That you trust me in your own noble-  
ness,  
I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd  
away, the Queen

1190

Brake from the vast oriel-embowering  
vine  
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast  
them off,  
Till all the place whereon she stood  
was green ;  
Then, when he ceased, in one cold pas-  
sive hand  
Received at once and laid aside the  
gems  
There on a table near her, and re-  
plied :

'It may be I am quicker of belief  
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the  
Lake.

Our bond is not the bond of man and  
wife.

This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill, <sup>1200</sup>  
It can be broken easier. I for you  
This many a year have done despite  
and wrong

To one whom ever in my heart of  
hearts

I did acknowledge nobler. What are  
these ?

Diamonds for me! they had been thrice  
their worth

Being your gift, had you not lost your  
own.

To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!  
For her! for your new fancy. Only  
this

Grant me, I pray you ; have your joys  
apart. <sup>1210</sup>

I doubt not that, however changed,  
you keep

So much of what is graceful ; and my-  
self

Would shun to break those bounds of  
courtesy

In which as Arthur's Queen I move  
and rule,

So cannot speak my mind. An end to  
this!

A strange one! yet I take it with  
Amen.

So pray you, add my diamonds to her  
pearls ;

Deck her with these ; tell her, she  
shines me down :

An armlet for an arm to which the  
Queen's

Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck <sup>1220</sup>  
O, as much fairer — as a faith once fair

Was richer than these diamonds — hers  
not mine —

Nay, by the mother of our Lord him-  
self,

Or hers or mine, mine now to work my  
will —

She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,  
And, thro' the casement standing wide  
for heat,  
Flung them, and down they flash'd,  
and smote the stream.

Then from the smitten surface flash'd,  
as it were,  
Diamonds to meet them, and they past  
away.

Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half  
disdain <sup>1230</sup>

At love, life, all things, on the window  
ledge,

Close underneath his eyes, and right  
across

Where these had fallen, slowly past  
the barge

Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest  
night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not,  
burst away

To weep and wail in secret ; and the  
barge,

On to the palace-doorway sliding,  
paused.

There two stood arm'd, and kept the  
door ; to whom,

All up the marble stair, tier over  
tier, <sup>1240</sup>

Were added mouths that gaped, and  
eyes that ask'd,

'What is it ?' but that oarsman's hag-  
gard face,

As hard and still as is the face that  
men

Shape to their fancy's eye from broken  
rocks

On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and  
they said :

'He is enchanted, cannot speak — and  
she,

Look how she sleeps — the Fairy  
Queen, so fair !

Yea, but how pale ! what are they ?  
flesh and blood ?

Or come to take the King to Fairyland ?  
For some do hold our Arthur cannot  
die, <sup>1250</sup>

But that he passes into Fairyland.'

While thus they babbled of the King,  
the King

Came girt with knights. Then turn'd  
the tongueless man

From the half-face to the full eye, and  
rose

And pointed to the damsel and the  
doors.

So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale

And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the  
maid;  
And reverently they bore her into  
hall.  
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,  
And Lancelot later came and mused at  
her, <sup>1260</sup>  
And last the Queen herself, and pitied  
her;  
But Arthur spied the letter in her  
hand,  
Stooped, took, brake seal, and read it;  
this was all:

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the  
Lake,  
I, sometimes call'd the maid of Astolat,  
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
Hither, to take my last farewell of  
you.  
I loved you, and my love had no return,  
And therefore my true love has been  
my death.  
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere, <sup>1270</sup>  
And to all other ladies, I make moan:  
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
As thou art a knight peerless.'

Thus he read;  
And ever in the reading lords and  
dames  
Wept, looking often from his face who  
read  
To hers which lay so silent, and at  
times,  
So touch'd were they, half-thinking  
that her lips  
Who had devised the letter moved  
again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to  
them all: <sup>1280</sup>  
'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that  
hear,  
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death  
Right heavy am I; for good she was  
and true,  
But loved me with a love beyond all  
love  
In women, whomsoever I have known.

Yet to be loved makes not to love  
again;  
Not at my years, however it hold in  
youth.  
I swear by truth and knighthood that  
I gave  
No cause, not willingly, for such a  
love.  
To this I call my friends in testimony, <sup>1290</sup>  
Her brethren, and her father, who  
himself  
Besought me to be plain and blunt,  
and use,  
To break her passion, some discourtesy  
Against my nature; what I could, I  
did.  
I left her and I bade her no farewell;  
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would  
have died,  
I might have put my wits to some  
rough use,  
And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen —  
Sea was her wrath, yet working after  
storm:  
'Ye might at least have done her so  
much grace, <sup>1300</sup>  
Fair lord, as would have help'd her  
from her death.'  
He raised his head, their eyes met and  
hers fell,  
He adding: 'Queen, she would not be  
content  
Save that I wedded her, which could  
not be.  
Then might she follow me thro' the  
world, she ask'd;  
It could not be. I told her that her  
love  
Was but the flash of youth, would  
darken down,  
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
Toward one more worthy of her —  
then would I,  
More specially were he she wedded  
poor, <sup>1310</sup>  
Estate them with large land and territory  
In mine own realm beyond the narrow  
seas,  
To keep them in all joyance. More  
than this  
I could not; this she would not, and  
she died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd: 'O  
my knight,  
It will be to thy worship, as my  
knight,  
And mine, as head of all our Table  
Round,  
To see that she be buried worshipfully.

So toward that shrine which then in  
all the realm  
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly  
went <sup>1320</sup>  
The marshall'd Order of their Table  
Round,  
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to  
see  
The maiden buried, not as one un-  
known,  
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obse-  
quies,  
And mass, and rolling music, like a  
queen.  
And when the knights had laid her  
comely head  
Low in the dust of half-forgotten  
kings,  
Then Arthur spake among them: 'Let  
her tomb  
Be costly, and her image thereupon,  
And let the shield of Lancelot at her  
feet <sup>1330</sup>  
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.  
And let the story of her dolorous voy-  
age  
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her  
tomb  
In letters gold and azure!' which was  
wrought  
Thereafter; but when now the lords  
and dames  
And people, from the high door stream-  
ing, brake  
Disorderly, as homeward each, the  
Queen,  
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he  
moved apart,  
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing,  
'Lancelot,  
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in  
love.' <sup>1340</sup>  
He answer'd with his eyes upon the  
ground,  
'That is love's curse; pass on, my  
Queen, forgiven.'  
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy  
brows,

Approach'd him, and with full affec-  
tion said:

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in  
whom I have  
Most joy and most affiance, for I  
know  
What thou hast been in battle by my  
side,  
And many a time have watch'd thee at  
the tilt  
Strike down the lusty and long prac-  
tised knight  
And let the younger and unskill'd go  
by <sup>1350</sup>  
To win his honor and to make his  
name,  
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a  
man  
Made to be loved; but now I would to  
God,  
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine  
eyes,  
Thou couldst have loved this maiden,  
shaped, it seems,  
By God for thee alone, and from her  
face,  
If one may judge the living by the  
dead,  
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,  
Who might have brought thee, now a  
lonely man  
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue,  
sons <sup>1360</sup>  
Born to the glory of thy name and  
fame,  
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of  
the Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot: 'Fair she  
was, my King,  
Pure, as you ever wish your knights  
to be.  
To doubt her fairness were to want an  
eye,  
To doubt her pureness were to want a  
heart—  
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy  
love  
Could bind him, but free love will not  
be bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,'  
said the King.  
'Let love be free; free love is for the  
best. <sup>1370</sup>

And, after heaven, on our dull side of  
 death,  
 What should be best, if not so pure a  
 love  
 Clothed in so pure a loveliness ? yet  
 thee  
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I  
 think,  
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I  
 know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but  
 he went,  
 And at the inrunning of a little brook  
 Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd  
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his  
 eyes  
 And saw the barge that brought her  
 moving down, <sup>1380</sup>  
 Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and  
 said  
 Low in himself: 'Ah, simple heart  
 and sweet,  
 Yeloved me, damsel, surely with a love  
 Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray  
 for thy soul ?  
 Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now  
 at last —  
 Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in  
 love ?"  
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jeal-  
 ous pride ?  
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of  
 love,  
 May not your crescent fear for name  
 and fame  
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that  
 wanes ? <sup>1390</sup>  
 Why did the King dwell on my name  
 to me ?  
 Mine own name shames me, seeming a  
 reproach,  
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake  
 Caught from his mother's arms — the  
 wondrous one  
 Who passes thro' the vision of the  
 night —  
 She chanted snatches of mysterious  
 hymns  
 Heard on the winding waters, eve and  
 morn  
 She kiss'd me, saying, "Thou art fair,  
 my child,  
 As a king's son," and often in her arms  
 She bare me, pacing on the dusky  
 mere. <sup>1400</sup>

Would she had drown'd me in it,  
 where'er it be !  
 For what am I ? what profits me my  
 name  
 Of greatest knight ? I fought for it,  
 and have it.  
 Pleasure to have it, none ; to lose it,  
 pain ;  
 Now grown a part of me ; but what  
 use in it ?  
 To make men worse by making my  
 sin known ?  
 Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming  
 great ?  
 Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a  
 man  
 Not after Arthur's heart ! I needs  
 must break  
 These bonds that so defame me. Not  
 without <sup>1410</sup>  
 She wills it — would I, if she will'd it ?  
 nay,  
 Who knows ? but if I would not, then  
 may God,  
 I pray him, send a sudden angel down  
 To seize me by the hair and bear me  
 far,  
 And fling me deep in that forgotten  
 mere,  
 Among the tumbled fragments of the  
 hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful  
 pain,  
 Not knowing he should die a holy  
 man.

## THE HOLY GRAIL

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of prow-  
 ess done  
 In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale  
 Whom Arthur and his knighthood  
 call'd the Pure,  
 Had past into the silent life of prayer.  
 Praise, fast, and alms ; and leaving for  
 the cowl  
 The helmet in an abbey far away  
 From Camelot, there, and not long  
 after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the  
 rest,  
 Ambrosius, loved him much beyond  
 the rest,



And honor'd him, and wrought into  
 his heart <sup>10</sup>  
 A way by love that waken'd love  
 within,  
 To answer that which came; and as  
 they sat  
 Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darken-  
 ing half  
 The cloisters, on a gustful April morn  
 That puff'd the swaying branches into  
 smoke  
 Above them, ere the summer when he  
 died,  
 The monk Ambrosius question'd Per-  
 cival:

'O brother, I have seen this yew-  
 tree smoke,  
 Spring after spring, for half a hundred  
 years;  
 For never have I known the world  
 without, <sup>20</sup>  
 Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale.  
 But thee,  
 When first thou camest — such a cour-  
 tesy  
 Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice  
 — I knew  
 For one of those who eat in Arthur's  
 hall;  
 For good ye are and bad, and like to  
 coins,  
 Some true, some light, but every one  
 of you  
 Stamp'd with the image of the King;  
 and now  
 Tell me, what drove thee from the  
 Table Round,  
 My brother? was it earthly passion  
 crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight; 'for no such  
 passion mine. <sup>30</sup>  
 But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail  
 Drove me from all vainglories, rival-  
 ries,  
 And earthly heats that spring and  
 sparkle out  
 Among us in the jousts, while women  
 watch  
 Who wins, who falls, and waste the  
 spiritual strength  
 Within us, better offer'd up to heaven.'

To whom the monk: 'The Holy  
 Grail! — I trust

We are green in Heaven's eyes; but  
 here too much  
 We moulder — as to things without I  
 mean —  
 Yet one of your own knights, a guest  
 of ours, <sup>40</sup>  
 Told us of this in our refectory,  
 But spake with such a sadness and so  
 low  
 We heard not half of what he said.  
 What is it?  
 The phantom of a cup that comes and  
 goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' an-  
 swer'd Percivale.  
 'The cup, the cup itself, from which  
 our Lord  
 Drank at the last sad supper with his  
 own.  
 This, from the blessed land of Aro-  
 mat —  
 After the day of darkness, when the  
 dead  
 Went wandering o'er Moriah — the  
 good saint <sup>50</sup>  
 Arimathæan Joseph, journeying  
 brought  
 To Glastonbury, where the winter  
 thorn  
 Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our  
 Lord.  
 And there awhile it bode; and if a man  
 Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at  
 once,  
 By faith, of all his ills. But then the  
 times  
 Grew to such evil that the holy cup  
 Was caught away to heaven, and dis-  
 appear'd.'

To whom the monk: 'From our old  
 books I know  
 That Joseph came of old to Glaston-  
 bury, <sup>60</sup>  
 And there the heathen Prince, Arvira-  
 gus,  
 Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to  
 build;  
 And there he built with wattles from  
 the marsh  
 A little lonely church in days of yore,  
 For so they say, these books of ours,  
 but seem  
 Mute of this miracle, far as I have  
 read.

But who first saw the holy thing to-day ?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,  
And one no further off in blood from me  
Than sister; and if ever holy maid <sup>70</sup>  
With knees of adoration wore the stone,  
A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,  
But that was in her earlier maiden-hood,  
With such a fervent flame of human love,  
Which, being rudely blunted, glanced and shot  
Only to holy things; to prayer and praise  
She gave herself, to fast and alms.  
And yet,  
Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,  
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,  
And the strange sound of an adulterous race, <sup>80</sup>  
Across the iron grating of her cell  
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or what  
Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,  
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,  
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,  
A legend handed down thro' five or six,  
And each of these a hundred winters old,  
From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made  
His Table Round, and all men's hearts became <sup>90</sup>  
Clean for a season, surely he had thought  
That now the Holy Grail would come again;  
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,  
And heal the world of all their wickedness!  
'O Father!' ask'd the maiden,  
'might it come  
To me by prayer and fasting?'  
'Nay,' said he,

"I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow."

And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun  
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought  
She might have risen and floated when I saw her. <sup>100</sup>

'For on a day she sent to speak with me.  
And when she came to speak, behold her eyes  
Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,  
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,  
Beautiful in the light of holiness!  
And "O my brother Percivale," she said,  
"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail;  
For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound  
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills  
Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's use' <sup>110</sup>  
To hunt by moonlight.' And the slender sound  
As from a distance beyond distance grew  
Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,  
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,  
Was like that music as it came; and then  
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,  
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,  
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,  
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed  
With rosy colors leaping on the wall;  
And then the music faded, and the Grail <sup>121</sup>  
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls  
The rosy quiverings died into the night.  
So now the Holy Thing is here again  
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,  
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,

That so perchance the vision may be  
seen

By thee and those, and all the world  
be heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake  
of this

To all men; and myself fasted and  
pray'd <sup>130</sup>

Always, and many among us many a  
week

Fasted and pray'd even to the utter-  
most,

Expectant of the wonder that would  
be.

'And one there was among us, ever  
moved

Among us in white armor, Galahad.

"God make thee good as thou art  
beautiful!"

Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him  
knight, and none

In so young youth was ever made a  
knight

Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when  
he heard

My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;  
His eyes became so like her own, they

seem'd <sup>141</sup>  
Hers, and himself her brother more  
than I.

Sister or brother none had he; but  
some

Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some  
said

Begotten by enchantment — chattering  
they,

Like birds of passage piping up and  
down,

That gape for flies — we know not  
whence they come;

For when was Lancelot wanderingly  
lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden,  
shore away

Clean from her forehead all that wealth  
of hair <sup>150</sup>

Which made a silken mat-work for her  
feet;

And out of this she plaited broad and  
long

A strong sword-belt, and wove with  
silver thread

And crimson in the belt a strange de-  
vice,

A crimson grail within a silver beam;  
And saw the bright boy-knight, and

bound it on him,  
Saying: "My knight, my love, my

knight of heaven,  
O thou, my love, whose love is one

with mine,  
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind

my belt.  
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I

have seen, <sup>160</sup>  
And break thro' all, till one will crown  
thee king

Far in the spiritual city;" and as she  
spake

She sent the deathless passion in her  
eyes

Thro' him, and made him hers, and  
laid her mind

On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle. O  
brother,

In our great hall there stood a vacant  
chair,

Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,  
And carven with strange figures; and

in and out  
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll

Of letters in a tongue no man could  
read. <sup>171</sup>

And Merlin call'd it "the Siege Peril-  
ous,"

Perilous for good and ill; "for there,"  
he said,

"No man could sit but he should lose  
himself."

And once by misadventence Merlin sat  
In his own chair, and so was lost; but

he,  
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's

doom,  
Cried, "If I lose myself, I save my-  
self!"

'Then on a summer night it came  
to pass,

While the great banquet lay along  
the hall, <sup>180</sup>

That Galahad would sit down in Mer-  
lin's chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat,  
we heard

A cracking and a riving of the roofs,  
And rending, and a blast, and overhead  
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.  
And in the blast there smote along the  
hall

A beam of light seven times more  
clear than day;

And down the long beam stole the  
Holy Grail

All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,  
And none might see who bare it, and  
it past.

But every knight beheld his fellow's  
face

As in a glory, and all the knights  
arose,

And staring each at other like dumb  
men

Stood, till I found a voice and sware  
a vow.

'I sware a vow before them all,  
that I,

Because I had not seen the Grail,  
would ride

A twelvemonth and a day in quest of  
it,

Until I found and saw it, as the nun  
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware  
the vow,

And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's  
cousin, sware,

And Lancelot sware, and many among  
the knights,

And Gawain sware, and louder than  
the rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius,  
asking him,

'What said the King? Did Arthur  
take the vow?'

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale,  
'the King,

Was not in hall; for early that same  
day,

Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit  
bold,

An outraged maiden sprang into the  
hall

Crying on help; for all her shining  
hair

Was smear'd with earth, and either  
milky arm

Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and  
all she wore

Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is  
torn

In tempest. So the King arose and  
went

To smoke the scandalous hive of those  
wild bees

That made such honey in his realm.  
Howbeit

Some little of this marvel he too saw,  
Returning o'er the plain that then  
began

To darken under Camelot; whence  
the King

Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there!  
the roofs

Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-  
smoke!

Pray heaven, they be not smitten by  
the bolt!"

For dear to Arthur was that hall of  
ours,

As having there so oft with all his  
knights

Feasted, and as the stateliest under  
heaven.

'O brother, had you known our  
mighty hall,

Which Merlin built for Arthur long  
ago!

For all the sacred mount of Camelot,  
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,

Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,  
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rush-

ing brook,

Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin  
built.

And four great zones of sculpture, set  
betwixt

With many a mystic symbol, gird the  
hall;

And in the lowest beasts are slaying  
men,

And in the second men are slaying  
beasts,

And on the third are warriors, perfect  
men,

And on the fourth are men with  
growing wings,

And over all one statue in the mould  
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a

crown,  
And peak'd wings pointed to the  
Northern Star.

And eastward fronts the statue, and  
the crown

And both the wings are made of gold,  
and flame

At sunrise till the people in far fields,  
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,  
Behold it, crying, "We have still a  
king."

'And, brother, had you known our  
hall within,  
Broader and higher than any in all  
the lands!

Where twelve great windows blazon  
Arthur's wars,  
And all the light that falls upon the  
board

Streams thro' the twelve great battles  
of our King. <sup>250</sup>

Nay, one there is, and at the eastern  
end,

Wealthy with wandering lines of  
mount and mere,

Where Arthur finds the brand Excali-  
bur.

And also one to the west, and counter  
to it,

And blank; and who shall blazon it?  
when and how?—

O, there, perchance, when all our  
wars are done,

The brand Excalibur will be cast  
away!

'So to this hall full quickly rode  
the King,

In horror lest the work by Merlin  
wrought,

Dreamlike, should on the sudden van-  
ish, wrapt <sup>260</sup>

In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.  
And in he rode, and up I glanced,  
and saw

The golden dragon sparkling over all;  
And many of those who burnt the  
hold, their arms

Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed  
with smoke and sear'd,

Follow'd, and in among bright faces,  
ours,

Full of the vision, prest; and then the  
King

Spake to me, being nearest, "Perci-  
vale,"—

Because the hall was all in tumult—  
some

Vowing, and some protesting,—  
"What is this?" <sup>270</sup>

'O brother, when I told him what  
had chanced,

My sister's vision and the rest, his face  
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than  
once,

When some brave deed seem'd to be  
done in vain,

Darken; and "Woe is me, my knights,"  
he cried,

"Had I been here, ye had not sworn  
the vow."

Bold was mine answer, "Had thyself  
been here,

My King, thou wouldst have sworn."  
"Yea, yea," said he,

"Art thou so bold and hast not seen  
the Grail?"

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I  
saw the light, <sup>280</sup>

But since I did not see the holy thing,  
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw."

'Then when he ask'd us, knight by  
knight, if any

Had seen it, all their answers were as  
one:

"Nay, lord, and therefore have we  
sworn our vows."

"Lo, now," said Arthur, "have  
ye seen a cloud?

What go ye into the wilderness to  
see?"

'Then Galahad on the sudden, and  
in a voice

Shrilling along the hall to Arthur,  
call'd,

"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy  
Grail, <sup>290</sup>

I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—  
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow  
me!'"

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the  
King, "for such

As thou art is the vision, not for these.  
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a  
sign—

Holier is none, my Percivale, than  
she—

A sign to main this Order which I  
made.

But ye that follow but the leader's  
bell."—

Brother, the King was hard upon his  
 knights, —  
 "Taliessin is our fullest throat of  
 song, <sup>300</sup>  
 And one hath sung and all the dumb  
 will sing.  
 Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath over-  
 borne  
 Five knights at once, and every  
 younger knight,  
 Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,  
 Till overborne by one, he learns —  
 and ye,  
 What are ye? Galahads? — no, nor  
 Percivales" —  
 For thus it pleased the King to range  
 me close  
 After Sir Galahad; — "nay," said he,  
 "but men  
 With strength and will to right the  
 wrong'd, of power  
 To lay the sudden heads of violence  
 flat, <sup>310</sup>  
 Knights that in twelve great battles  
 splash'd and dyed  
 The strong White Horse in his own  
 heathen blood —  
 But one hath seen, and all the blind  
 will see.  
 Go, since your vows are sacred, being  
 made.  
 Yet — for ye know the cries of all my  
 realm  
 Pass thro' this hall — how often, O  
 my knights,  
 Your places being vacant at my side,  
 This chance of noble deeds will come  
 and go  
 Unchallenged, while ye follow wan-  
 dering fires  
 Lost in the quagmire! Many of you,  
 yea most, <sup>320</sup>  
 Return no more. Ye think I show  
 myself  
 Too dark a prophet. Come now, let  
 us meet  
 The morrow morn once more in one  
 full field  
 Of gracious pastime, that once more  
 the King,  
 Before ye leave him for this quest,  
 may count  
 The yet-unbroken strength of all his  
 knights,  
 Rejoicing in that Order which he  
 made."

'So when the sun broke next from  
 underground,  
 All the great Table of our Arthur  
 closed  
 And clash'd in such a tourney and so  
 full, <sup>330</sup>  
 So many lances broken — never yet  
 Had Camelot seen the like since Ar-  
 thur came;  
 And I myself and Galahad, for a  
 strength  
 Was in us from the vision, overthrew  
 So many knights that all the people  
 cried,  
 And almost burst the barriers in their  
 heat,  
 Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Per-  
 civale!"

'But when the next day brake from  
 underground —  
 O brother, had you known our Came-  
 lot,  
 Built by old kings, age after age, so  
 old <sup>340</sup>  
 The King himself had fears that it  
 would fall,  
 So strange, and rich, and dim; for  
 where the roofs  
 Totter'd toward each other in the  
 sky,  
 Met foreheads all along the street of  
 those  
 Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and  
 where the long  
 Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd  
 the necks  
 Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,  
 Thicker than drops from thunder,  
 showers of flowers  
 Fell as we past; and men and boys  
 astride  
 On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin,  
 swan, <sup>350</sup>  
 At all the corners, named us each by  
 name,  
 Calling "God speed!" but in the  
 ways below  
 The knights and ladies wept, and rich  
 and poor  
 Wept, and the King himself could  
 hardly speak  
 For grief, and all in middle street the  
 Queen,  
 Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and  
 shriek'd aloud,

"This madness has come on us for  
our sins."  
So to the Gate of the Three Queens  
we came,  
Where Arthur's wars are render'd  
mystically,  
And thence departed every one his  
way. 360

'And I was lifted up in heart, and  
thought  
Of all my late-shown prowess in the  
lists,  
How my strong lance had beaten down  
the knights,  
So many and famous names; and  
never yet  
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor  
earth so green,  
For all my blood danced in me, and I  
knew  
That I should light upon the Holy  
Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of  
our King,  
That most of us would follow wan-  
dering fires,  
Came like a driving gloom across my  
mind. 370  
Then every evil word I had spoken  
once,  
And every evil thought I had thought  
of old,  
And every evil deed I ever did,  
Awoke and cried, "This quest is not  
for thee."  
And lifting up mine eyes, I found  
myself  
Alone, and in a land of sand and  
thorns,  
And I was thirsty even unto  
death;  
And I, too, cried, "This quest is not  
for thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought  
my thirst  
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and  
then a brook, 380  
With one sharp rapid, where the crisp-  
ing white  
Play'd ever back upon the sloping  
wave  
And took both ear and eye; and o'er  
the brook

Were apple-trees, and apples by the  
brook  
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will  
rest here,"  
I said, "I am not worthy of the  
quest;"  
But even while I drank the brook, and  
ate  
The goodly apples, all these things at  
once  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone  
And thirsting in a land of sand and  
thorns. 390

'And then behold a woman at a  
door  
Spinning; and fair the house whereby  
she sat,  
And kind the woman's eyes and inno-  
cent,  
And all her bearing gracious; and she  
rose  
Opening her arms to meet me, as who  
should say,  
"Rest here;" but when I touch'd her,  
lo! she, too,  
Fell into dust and nothing, and the  
house  
Became no better than a broken  
shed,  
And in it a dead babe; and also  
this  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

'And on I rode, and greater was  
my thirst. 401  
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the  
world,  
And where it smote the plowshare in  
the field  
The plowman left his plowing and  
fell down  
Before it; where it glitter'd on her  
pail  
The milkmaid left her milking and  
fell down  
Before it, and I knew not why, but  
thought  
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had  
risen.  
Then was I ware of one that on me  
moved  
In golden armor with a crown of  
gold  
About a casque all jewels, and his  
horse 411

In golden armor jewelled everywhere;  
 And on the splendor came, flashing  
 me blind,  
 And seem'd to me the lord of all the  
 world,  
 Being so huge. But when I thought  
 he meant  
 To crush me, moving on me, lo ! he,  
 too,  
 Open'd his arms to embrace me as he  
 came,  
 And up I went and touch'd him, and  
 he, too,  
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone  
 And wearying in a land of sand and  
 thorns. 420

'And I rode on and found a mighty  
 hill,  
 And on the top a city wall'd ; the  
 spires  
 Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into  
 heaven.  
 And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd ;  
 and these  
 Cried to me climbing, "Welcome,  
 Percivale !  
 Thou mightiest and thou purest among  
 men !"  
 And glad was I and clomb, but found  
 at top  
 No man, nor any voice. And thence  
 I past  
 Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw  
 That man had once dwelt there ; but  
 there I found 430  
 Only one man of an exceeding age.  
 "Where is that goodly company,"  
 said I,  
 "That so cried out upon me ?" and  
 he had  
 Scarce any voice to answer, and yet  
 gasp'd,  
 "Whence and what art thou ?" and  
 even as he spoke  
 Fell into dust and disappear'd, and I  
 Was left alone once more and cried in  
 grief,  
 "Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself  
 And touch it, it will crumble into  
 dust !"

'And thence I dropt into a lowly  
 vale, 440  
 Low as the hill was high, and where  
 the vale

Was lowest found a chapel, and there-  
 by  
 A holy hermit in a hermitage,  
 To whom I told my phantoms, and he  
 said :

"O son, thou hast not true humil-  
 ity,  
 The highest virtue, mother of them  
 all ;  
 For when the Lord of all things made  
 Himself  
 Naked of glory for His mortal change,  
 'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all  
 is thine,'  
 And all her form shone forth with  
 sudden light 450  
 So that the angels were amazed, and  
 she  
 Follow'd Him down, and like a flying  
 star  
 Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the  
 east.  
 But her thou hast not known ; for  
 what is this  
 Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and  
 thy sins ?  
 Thou hast not lost thyself to save thy-  
 self  
 As Galahad." When the hermit made  
 an end,  
 In silver armor suddenly Galahad  
 shone  
 Before us, and against the chapel door  
 Laid lance and enter'd, and we knelt in  
 prayer. 460  
 And there the hermit slaked my burn-  
 ing thirst,  
 And at the sacring of the mass I saw  
 The holy elements alone ; but he,  
 "Saw ye no more ? I, Galahad, saw  
 the Grail,  
 The Holy Grail, descend upon the  
 shrine.  
 I saw the fiery face as of a child  
 That smote itself into the bread and  
 went ;  
 And hither am I come ; and never  
 yet  
 Hath what thy sister taught me first  
 to see,  
 This holy thing, fail'd from my side,  
 nor come 470  
 Cover'd, but moving with me night  
 and day,  
 Fainter by day, but always in the night



Blood-red, and sliding down the black-  
 en'd marsh  
 Blood-red, and on the naked mountain  
 top  
 Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere  
 below  
 Blood-red. And in the strength of  
 this I rode,  
 Shattering all evil customs every-  
 where,  
 And past thro' Pagan realms, and  
 made them mine,  
 And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and  
 bore them down,  
 And broke thro' all, and in the strength  
 of this <sup>480</sup>  
 Come victor. But my time is hard at  
 hand,  
 And hence I go, and one will crown  
 me king  
 Far in the spiritual city; and come  
 thou, too,  
 For thou shalt see the vision when I  
 go."

'While thus he spake, his eye,  
 dwelling on mine,  
 Drew me, with power upon me, till I  
 grew  
 One with him, to believe as he be-  
 lieved.  
 Then, when the day began to wane, we  
 went.

'There rose a hill that none but man  
 could climb,  
 Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-  
 courses—  
 Storm at the top, and when we gain'd <sup>490</sup>  
 it, storm  
 Round us and death; for every mo-  
 ment glanced  
 His silver arms and gloom'd, so quick  
 and thick  
 The lightnings here and there to left  
 and right  
 Struck, till the dry old trunks about  
 us, dead,  
 Yea, rotten with a hundred years of  
 death,  
 Sprang into fire. And at the base we  
 found  
 On either hand, as far as eye could  
 see,  
 A great black swamp and of an evil  
 smell,

Part black, part whiten'd with the  
 bones of men, <sup>500</sup>  
 Not to be crost, save that some an-  
 cient king  
 Had built a way, where, link'd with  
 many a bridge,  
 A thousand piers ran into the great  
 Sea.  
 And Galahad fled along them bridge  
 by bridge,  
 And every bridge as quickly as he  
 crost  
 Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I  
 yearn'd  
 To follow; and thrice above him all  
 the heavens  
 Open'd and blazed with thunder such  
 as seem'd  
 Shoutings of all the sons of God. And  
 first  
 At once I saw him far on the great  
 Sea, <sup>510</sup>  
 In silver-shining armor starry-clear;  
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel  
 hung  
 Clothed in white samite or a luminous  
 cloud.  
 And with exceeding swiftness ran the  
 boat,  
 If boat it were—I saw not whence it  
 came.  
 And when the heavens open'd and  
 blazed again  
 Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—  
 And had he set the sail, or had the  
 boat  
 Become a living creature clad with  
 wings?  
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel  
 hung <sup>520</sup>  
 Redder than any rose, a joy to me,  
 For now I knew the veil had been  
 withdrawn.  
 Then in a moment when they blazed  
 again  
 Opening, I saw the least of little stars  
 Down on the waste, and straight be-  
 yond the star  
 I saw the spiritual city and all her  
 spires  
 And gateways in a glory like one  
 pearl—  
 No larger, tho' the goal of all the  
 saints—  
 Strike from the sea; and from the star  
 there shot

A rose-red sparkle to the city, and  
 there<sup>530</sup>  
 Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy  
 Grail,  
 Which never eyes on earth again shall  
 see.  
 Then fell the floods of heaven drown-  
 ing the deep,  
 And how my feet recrost the deathful  
 ridge  
 No memory in me lives; but that I  
 touch'd  
 The chapel-doors at dawn I know, and  
 thence  
 Taking my war-horse from the holy  
 man,  
 Glad that no phantom vex't me more,  
 return'd  
 To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's  
 wars.'

O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius, —  
 'for in sooth<sup>540</sup>  
 These ancient books — and they would  
 win thee — teem,  
 Only I find not there this Holy Grail,  
 With miracles and marvels like to  
 these,  
 Not all unlike; which oftentime I  
 read,  
 Who read but on my breviary with  
 ease,  
 Till my head swims, and then go forth  
 and pass  
 Down to the little thorpe that lies so  
 close,  
 And almost plaster'd like a martin's  
 nest  
 To these old walls — and mingle with  
 our folk;  
 And knowing every honest face of  
 theirs<sup>550</sup>  
 As well as ever shepherd knew his  
 sheep,  
 And every homely secret in their  
 hearts,  
 Delight myself with gossip and old  
 wives,  
 And ills and aches, and teethings,  
 lyings-in,  
 And mirthful sayings, children of the  
 place,  
 That have no meaning half a league  
 away;  
 Or lulling random squabbles when  
 they rise,

Chafferings and chatterings at the  
 market-cross,  
 Rejoice, small man, in this small world  
 of mine,  
 Yea, even in their hens and in their  
 eggs —<sup>560</sup>  
 O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,  
 Came ye on none but phantoms in  
 your quest,  
 No man, no woman ?'

Then Sir Percivale .  
 'All men, to one so bound by such a  
 vow,  
 And women were as phantoms. O,  
 my brother,  
 Why wilt thou shame me to confess to  
 thee  
 How far I falter'd from my quest and  
 vow ?  
 For after I had lain so many nights,  
 A bed-mate of the snail and eft and  
 snake,  
 In grass and burdock, I was changed  
 to wan<sup>570</sup>  
 And meagre, and the vision had not  
 come;  
 And then I chanced upon a goodly  
 town  
 With one great dwelling in the middle  
 of it.  
 Thither I made, and there was I dis-  
 arm'd  
 By maidens each as fair as any flower;  
 But when they led me into hall, behold,  
 The princess of that castle was the one,  
 Brother, and that one only, who had  
 ever  
 Made my heart leap; for when I  
 moved of old<sup>579</sup>  
 A slender page about her father's hall,  
 And she a slender maiden, all my heart  
 Went after her with longing, yet we  
 twain  
 Had never kiss'd a kiss or vow'd a vow.  
 And now I came upon her once again,  
 And one had wedded her, and he was  
 dead,  
 And all his land and wealth and state  
 were hers.  
 And while I tarried, every day she set  
 A banquet richer than the day before  
 By me, for all her longing and her will  
 Was toward me as of old; till one fair  
 morn,<sup>590</sup>  
 I walking to and fro beside a stream

That flash'd across her orchard under-  
neath  
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my  
walk,  
And calling me the greatest of all  
knights,  
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the  
first time,  
And gave herself and all her wealth to  
me.  
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning  
word,  
That most of us would follow wander-  
ing fires,  
And the quest faded in my heart.  
Anon,  
The heads of all her people drew to me,  
With supplication both of knees and  
tongue : 601  
"We have heard of thee; thou art  
our greatest knight,  
Our Lady says it, and we well believe.  
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,  
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our  
land."  
O me, my brother! but one night my  
vow  
Burnt me within, so that I rose and  
fled,  
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine  
own self,  
And even the holy quest, and all but  
her;  
Then after I was join'd with Galahad  
Cared not for her nor anything upon  
earth.' 611

Then said the monk: 'Poor men,  
when yule is cold,  
Must be content to sit by little fires.  
And this am I, so that ye care for me  
Ever so little; yea, and blest be heaven  
That brought thee here to this poor  
house of ours  
Where all the brethren are so hard, to  
warm  
My cold heart with a friend; but O  
the pity  
To find thine own first love once more  
— to hold,  
Hold her a wealthy bride within thine  
arms, 620  
Or all but hold, and then—cast her  
aside,  
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a  
weed!

For we that want the warmth of  
double life,  
We that are plagued with dreams of  
something sweet  
Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich,—  
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-  
wise,  
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the  
cell,  
But live like an old badger in his earth,  
With earth about him everywhere  
despite  
All fast and penance. Saw ye none be  
side, 630  
None of your knights?

'Yea, so,' said Percivale:  
'One night my pathway swerving  
east, I saw  
The pelican on the casque of our Sir  
Bors  
All in the middle of the rising moon,  
And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd  
him, and he me,  
And each made joy of either. Then  
he ask'd:  
"Where is he? hast thou seen him—  
Lancelot?—Once,"  
Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across  
me—mad,  
And maddening what he rode; and  
when I cried,  
'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest  
So holy?' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me  
not! 641  
I have been the sluggard, and I ride  
apace,  
For now there is a lion in the way!'  
So vanish'd."

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on  
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lance-  
lot,  
Because his former madness, once the  
talk  
And scandal of our table, had return'd;  
For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship  
him  
That ill to him is ill to them, to Bors  
Beyond the rest. He well had been  
content 650  
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might  
have seen,  
The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,  
Being so clouded with his grief and  
love,

Small heart was his after the holy  
quest.  
If God would send the vision, well;  
if not,  
The quest and he were in the hands  
of Heaven.

'And then, with small adventure  
met, Sir Bors  
Rode to the lonest tract of all the  
realm,  
And found a people there among their  
crag,  
Our race and blood, a remnant that  
were left 660  
Paynim amid their circles, and the  
stones  
They pitch up straight to heaven; and  
their wise men  
Were strong in that old magic which  
can trace  
The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd  
at him  
And this high quest as at a simple  
thing,  
Told him he follow'd — almost Ar-  
thur's words —  
A mocking fire: "what other fire than  
he  
Whereby the blood beats, and the  
blossom blows,  
And the sea rolls, and all the world is  
warm'd?"  
And when his answer chafed them, the  
rough crowd, 670  
Hearing he had a difference with their  
priests,  
Seized him, and bound and plunged  
him into a cell  
Of great piled stones; and lying  
bounden there  
In darkness thro' innumerable hours  
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens  
sweep  
Over him till by miracle — what  
else? —  
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt  
and fell,  
Such as no wind could move; and  
thro' the gap  
Glimmer'd the streaming scud. Then  
came a night  
Still as the day was loud, and thro'  
the gap 680  
The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table  
Round —

For, brother, so one night, because  
they roll  
Thro' such a round in heaven, we  
named the stars,  
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our  
King —  
And these, like bright eyes of familiar  
friends,  
In on him shone: "And then to me,  
to me,"  
Said good Sir Bors, "beyond all hopes  
of mine,  
Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for  
myself —  
Across the seven clear stars — O grace  
to me! —  
In color like the fingers of a hand 690  
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail  
Glided and past, and close upon it  
peal'd  
A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards,  
a maid,  
Who kept our holy faith among her  
kin  
In secret, entering, loosed and let him  
go.'

To whom the monk: 'And I re-  
member now  
That pelican on the casque. Sir Bors  
it was  
Who spake so low and sadly at our  
board,  
And mighty reverent at our grace was  
he;  
A square-set man and honest, and his  
eyes, 700  
An outdoor sign of all the warmth  
within,  
Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath  
a cloud,  
But heaven had meant it for a sunny  
one.  
Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But  
when ye reach'd  
The city, found ye all your knights  
return'd,  
Or was there sooth in Arthur's pro-  
phesy,  
Tell me, and what said each, and what  
the King?'

Then answer'd Percivale: 'And  
that can I,  
Brother, and truly; since the living  
words

Of so great men as Lancelot and our  
 King  
 Pass not from door to door and out<sup>710</sup>  
 again,  
 But sit within the house. O, when  
 we reach'd  
 The city, our horses stumbling as they  
 trode  
 On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,  
 Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cock-  
 atrices,  
 And shatter'd talbots, which had left  
 the stones  
 Raw that they fell from, brought us  
 to the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the dais-  
 throne,  
 And those that had gone out upon the  
 quest,  
 Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of  
 them,<sup>720</sup>  
 And those that had not, stood before  
 the King,  
 Who, when he saw me, rose and bade  
 me hail,  
 Saying: "A welfare in thine eyes re-  
 proves  
 Our fear of some disastrous chance  
 for thee  
 On hill or plain, at sea or flooding  
 ford.  
 So fierce a gale made havoc here of  
 late  
 Among the strange devices of our  
 kings,  
 Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall  
 of ours,  
 And from the statue Merlin moulded  
 for us  
 Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but  
 now — the quest,<sup>730</sup>  
 This vision — hast thou seen the Holy  
 Cup  
 That Joseph brought of old to Glas-  
 tonbury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast  
 heard,  
 Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt re-  
 solve  
 To pass away into the quiet life,  
 He answer'd not, but, sharply turn-  
 ing, ask'd  
 Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this quest  
 for thee?"

"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not  
 for such as I.  
 Therefore I communed with a saintly  
 man,  
 Who made me sure the quest was not  
 for me;<sup>740</sup>  
 For I was much a-wearied of the  
 quest,  
 But found a silk pavilion in a field,  
 And merry maidens in it; and then  
 this gale  
 Tore my pavilion from the tenting-  
 pin,  
 And blew my merry maidens all about  
 With all discomfort; yea, and but for  
 this,  
 My twelvemonth and a day were plea-  
 sant to me."

'He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to  
 whom at first  
 He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,  
 push'd  
 Athwart the throng to Lancelot,  
 caught his hand,<sup>750</sup>  
 Held it, and there, half-hidden by  
 him, stood,  
 Until the King espied him, saying to  
 him,  
 "Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and  
 true  
 Could see it, thou hast seen the  
 Grail;" and Bors,  
 "Ask me not, for I may not speak of  
 it;  
 I saw it;" and the tears were in his  
 eyes.

'Then there remain'd but Lance-  
 lot, for the rest  
 Spake but of sundry perils in the  
 storm.  
 Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy  
 Writ,  
 Our Arthur kept his best until the  
 last;<sup>760</sup>  
 "Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the  
 King, "my friend,  
 Our mightiest, hath this quest avail'd  
 for thee?"

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lance-  
 lot, with a groan;  
 "O King!" — and when he paused  
 methought I spied  
 A dying fire of madness in his eyes —

"O King, my friend, if friend of thine  
     I be,  
 Happier are those that welter in their  
     sin,  
 Swine in the mud, that cannot see for  
     slime,  
 Slime of the ditch ; but in me lived a  
     sin  
 So strange, of such a kind, that all of  
     pure, <sup>770</sup>  
 Noble, and knightly in me twined  
     and clung  
 Round that one sin, until the whole-  
     some flower  
 And poisonous grew together, each as  
     each,  
 Not to be pluck'd asunder ; and when  
     thy knights  
 Sware, I swear with them only in the  
     hope  
 That could I touch or see the Holy  
     Grail  
 They might be pluck'd asunder.  
     Then I spake  
 To one most holy saint, who wept and  
     said  
 That, save they could be pluck'd  
     asunder, all  
 My quest were but in vain ; to whom  
     I vow'd <sup>780</sup>  
 That I would work according as he  
     will'd.  
 And forth I went, and while I yearn'd  
     and strove  
 To tear the twain asunder in my  
     heart,  
 My madness came upon me as of old,  
 And whipt me into waste fields far  
     away.  
 There was I beaten down by little  
     men,  
 Mean knights, to whom the moving of  
     my sword  
 And shadow of my spear had been  
     enow  
 To scare them from me once ; and  
     then I came  
 All in my folly to the naked shore, <sup>790</sup>  
 Wide flats, where nothing but coarse  
     grasses grew ;  
 But such a blast, my King, began to  
     blow,  
 So loud a blast along the shore and  
     sea,  
 Ye could not hear the waters for the  
     blast,

Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all  
     the sea  
 Drove like a cataract, and all the sand  
 Swept like a river, and the clouded  
     heavens  
 Were shaken with the motion and the  
     sound.  
 And blackening in the sea-foam  
     sway'd a boat,  
 Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a  
     chain ; <sup>800</sup>  
 And in my madness to myself I said,  
 'I will embark and I will lose myself,  
 And in the great sea wash away my  
     sin.'  
 I burst the chain, I sprang into the  
     boat.  
 Seven days I drove along the dreary  
     deep,  
 And with me drove the moon and all  
     the stars ;  
 And the wind fell, and on the seventh  
     night  
 I heard the shingle grinding in the  
     surge,  
 And felt the boat shock earth, and  
     looking up,  
 Behold, the enchanted towers of Car-  
     bonek, <sup>810</sup>  
 A castle like a rock upon a rock,  
 With chasm-like portals open to the  
     sea,  
 And steps that met the breaker !  
     There was none  
 Stood near it but a lion on each side  
 That kept the entry, and the moon  
     was full.  
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up  
     the stairs,  
 There drew my sword. With sudden-  
     flaring manes  
 Those two great beasts rose upright  
     like a man,  
 Each gript a shoulder, and I stood be-  
     tween,  
 And, when I would have smitten  
     them, heard a voice, <sup>820</sup>  
 'Doubt not, go forward ; if thou  
     doubt, the beasts  
 Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with  
     violence  
 The sword was dash'd from out my  
     hand, and fell.  
 And up into the sounding hall I past ;  
 But nothing in the sounding hall I  
     saw,

No bench nor table, painting on the wall  
 Or shield of knight, only the rounded moon  
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.  
 But always in the quiet house I heard,  
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,  
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower  
 To the eastward. Up I climb'd a thousand steps  
 With pain ; as in a dream I seem'd to climb  
 For ever ; at the last I reach'd a door,  
 A light was in the crannies, and I heard,  
 " Glory and joy and honor to our Lord  
 And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail !"  
 Then in my madness I essay'd the door ;  
 It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat  
 As from a seven - times - heated furnace, I,  
 Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,  
 With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away —  
 O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,  
 All pall'd in crimson samite, and around  
 Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes !  
 And but for all my madness and my sin,  
 And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw  
 That which I saw ; but what I saw was veil'd  
 And cover'd, and this quest was not for me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing,  
 Lancelot left  
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain — nay,  
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words, —  
 A reckless and irreverent knight was he,  
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his King, —  
 Well, I will tell thee : " O King, my liege," he said,

" Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine ?  
 When have I stinted stroke in foughten field ?  
 But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,  
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,  
 Yea, made our mightiest madder than our least.  
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,  
 I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,  
 And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,  
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,  
 Henceforward."

" "Deafer," said the blameless King,  
 "Gawain, and blinder unto holy things,  
 Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,  
 Being too blind to have desire to see.  
 But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,  
 Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Percivale,  
 For these have seen according to their sight.  
 For every fiery prophet in old times,  
 And all the sacred madness of the bard,  
 When God made music thro' them, could but speak  
 His music by the framework and the chord ;  
 And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth."

" "Nay — but thou errest, Lancelot ; never yet  
 Could all of true and noble in knight and man  
 Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,  
 With such a closeness but apart there grew,  
 Save that he were the swine thou spake of,  
 Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness ;  
 Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower."

" "And spake I not too truly, O my knights ?  
 Was I too dark a prophet when I said

To those who went upon the Holy  
 Quest,  
 That most of them would follow wan-  
 dering fires,  
 Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me  
 and gone.  
 And left me gazing at a barren board,  
 And a lean Order—scarce return'd a  
 tithe—<sup>890</sup>  
 And out of those to whom the vision  
 came  
 My greatest hardly will believe he  
 saw.  
 Another hath beheld it afar off,  
 And, leaving human wrongs to right  
 themselves,  
 Cares but to pass into the silent life.  
 And one hath had the vision face to  
 face,  
 And now his chair desires him here in  
 vain,  
 However they may crown him other-  
 where.

“And some among you held that  
 if the King  
 Had seen the sight he would have  
 sworn the vow.<sup>900</sup>  
 Not easily, seeing that the King must  
 guard  
 That which he rules, and is but as the  
 hind  
 To whom a space of land is given to  
 plow,  
 Who may not wander from the allotted  
 field  
 Before his work be done, but, being  
 done,  
 Let visions of the night or of the  
 day  
 Come as they will; and many a time  
 they come,  
 Until this earth he walks on seems not  
 earth,  
 This light that strikes his eyeball is  
 not light,  
 This air that smites his forehead is  
 not air<sup>910</sup>  
 But vision—yea, his very hand and  
 foot—  
 In moments when he feels he cannot  
 die,  
 And knows himself no vision to him-  
 self,  
 Nor the high God a vision, nor that  
 One

Who rose again. Ye have seen what  
 ye have seen.”

‘So spake the King; I knew not all  
 he meant.’

## PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

KING ARTHUR made new knights to  
 fill the gap  
 Left by the Holy Quest; and as he  
 sat  
 In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors  
 Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these  
 a youth,  
 Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the  
 fields  
 Past, and the sunshine came along  
 with him.

‘Make me thy knight, because I  
 know, Sir King,  
 All that belongs to knighthood, and  
 I love.’  
 Such was his cry; for having heard  
 the King  
 Had let proclaim a tournament—the  
 prize<sup>10</sup>  
 A golden circlet and a knightly sword,  
 Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won  
 The golden circlet, for himself the  
 sword.  
 And there were those who knew him  
 near the King,  
 And promised for him; and Arthur  
 made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of  
 the Isles—  
 But lately come to his inheritance,  
 And lord of many a barren isle was  
 he—  
 Riding at noon, a day or twain before  
 Across the forest call'd of Dean, to  
 find<sup>20</sup>  
 Caerleon and the King, had felt the  
 sun  
 Beat like a strong knight on his helm  
 and reel'd  
 Almost to falling from his horse, but  
 saw  
 Near him a mound of even-sloping  
 side  
 Whereon a hundred stately beeches  
 grew,



And here and there great hollies under  
 them;  
 But for a mile all round was open  
 space  
 And fern and heath. And slowly Pelleas drew  
 To that dim day, then, binding his  
 good horse  
 To a tree, cast himself down; and as  
 he lay<sup>30</sup>  
 At random looking over the brown  
 earth  
 Thro' that green-glooming twilight of  
 the grove,  
 It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern  
 without  
 Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,  
 So that his eyes were dazzled looking  
 at it.  
 Then o'er it crost the dimness of a  
 cloud  
 Floating, and once the shadow of a bird  
 Flying, and then a fawn; and his eyes  
 closed.  
 And since he loved all maidens, but  
 no maid  
 In special, half-awake he whisper'd:  
 'Where?'<sup>40</sup>  
 O, where? I love thee, tho' I know  
 thee not.  
 For fair thou art and pure as Guinevere,  
 And I will make thee with my spear  
 and sword  
 As famous—O my Queen, my Guinevere,  
 For I will be thine Arthur when we  
 meet.'

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of  
 talk  
 And laughter at the limit of the wood,  
 And glancing thro' the hoary boles,  
 he saw,  
 Strange as to some old prophet might  
 have seem'd  
 A vision hovering on a sea of fire,<sup>50</sup>  
 Damsels in divers colors like the cloud  
 Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them  
 On horses, and the horses richly trapt  
 Breast-high in that bright line of  
 bracken stood;  
 And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,  
 And one was pointing this way and  
 one that,  
 Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,  
 And loosed his horse, and led him to  
 the light.  
 There she that seem'd the chief among  
 them said:  
 'In happy time behold our pilot-star!  
 Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we  
 ride,<sup>61</sup>  
 Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the  
 knights  
 There at Caerleon, but have lost our  
 way.  
 To right? to left? straight forward?  
 back again?  
 Which? tell us quickly.'

Pelleas gazing thought,  
 'Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?'  
 For large her violet eyes look'd, and  
 her bloom  
 A rosy dawn kindled in stainless hea-  
 vens,  
 And round her limbs, mature in wo-  
 manhood;  
 And slender was her hand and smal  
 her shape;<sup>70</sup>  
 And but for those large eyes, the  
 haunts of scorn,  
 She might have seem'd a toy to trifle  
 with,  
 And pass and care no more. But  
 while he gazed  
 The beauty of her flesh abash'd the  
 boy,  
 As tho' it were the beauty of her  
 soul;  
 For as the base man, judging of the  
 good,  
 Puts his own baseness in him by de-  
 fault  
 Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend  
 All the young beauty of his own soul  
 to hers,  
 Believing her, and when she spake to  
 him<sup>80</sup>  
 Stammer'd, and could not make her a  
 reply.  
 For out of the waste islands had he  
 come,  
 Where saving his own sisters he had  
 known  
 Scarce any but the women of his isles,  
 Rough wives, that laugh'd and  
 scream'd against the gulls,  
 Makers of nets, and living from the  
 sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the  
 lady round  
 And look'd upon her people; and, as  
 when  
 A stone is flung into some sleeping  
 tarn  
 The circle widens till it lip the marge,  
 Spread the slow smile thro' all her  
 company.<sup>91</sup>  
 Three knights were thereamong, and  
 they too smiled,  
 Scorning him; for the lady was Et-  
 tarre,  
 And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said: 'O wild and of the  
 woods,  
 Knowest thou not the fashion of our  
 speech?  
 Or have the Heavens but given thee  
 a fair face,  
 Lacking a tongue?'

'O damsel,' answer'd he,  
 'I woke from dreams, and coming  
 out of gloom  
 Was dazzled by the sudden light, and  
 crave<sup>100</sup>  
 Pardon: but will ye to Caerleon? I  
 Go likewise; shall I lead you to the  
 King?'

'Lead then,' she said; and thro'  
 the woods they went.  
 And while they rode, the meaning in  
 his eyes,  
 His tenderness of manner, and chaste  
 awe,  
 His broken utterances and bashful-  
 ness,  
 Were all a burthen to her, and in her  
 heart  
 She mutter'd, 'I have lighted on a  
 fool,  
 Raw, yet so stale!' But since her  
 mind was bent  
 On hearing, after trumpet blown, her  
 name<sup>110</sup>  
 And title, 'Queen of Beauty,' in the  
 lists  
 Cried—and beholding him so strong  
 she thought  
 That peradventure he will fight for  
 me,  
 And win the circlet—therefore flat-  
 ter'd him,

Being so gracious that he wellnigh  
 deem'd  
 His wish by hers was echo'd; and her  
 knights  
 And all her damsels too were gracious  
 to him,  
 For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd  
 Caerleon, ere they past to lodging,  
 she,  
 Taking his hand, 'O the strong hand,'  
 she said,<sup>120</sup>  
 'See! look at mine! but wilt thou  
 fight for me,  
 And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,  
 That I may love thee?'

Then his helpless heart  
 Leapt, and he cried, 'Ay! wilt thou  
 if I win?'  
 'Ay, that will I,' she answer'd, and  
 she laugh'd,  
 And straitly nipt the hand, and flung  
 it from her;  
 Then glanced askew at those three  
 knights of hers.  
 Till all her ladies laugh'd along with  
 her.

'O happy world,' thought Pelleas,  
 'all, meseems,  
 Are happy; I the happiest of them  
 all!'<sup>130</sup>  
 Nor slept that night for pleasure in his  
 blood,  
 And green wood-ways, and eyes among  
 the leaves;  
 Then being on the morrow knighted,  
 sware  
 To love one only. And as he came  
 away,  
 The men who met him rounded on  
 their heels  
 And wonder'd after him, because his  
 face  
 Shone like the countenance of a priest  
 of old  
 Against the flame about a sacrifice  
 Kindled by fire from heaven; so glad  
 was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets,  
 and strange knights<sup>140</sup>  
 From the four winds came in; and  
 each one sat.

Tho' served with choice from air, land,  
 stream, and sea,  
 Oft in mid-banquet measuring with  
 his eyes  
 His neighbor's make and might; and  
 Pelleas look'd  
 Noble among the noble, for he  
 dream'd  
 His lady loved him, and he knew him-  
 self  
 Loved of the King; and him his new-  
 made knight  
 Worshipt, whose lightest whisper  
 moved him more  
 Than all the ranged reasons of the  
 world.

Then blush'd and brake the morn-  
 ing of the jousts, <sup>150</sup>  
 And this was call'd 'The Tournament  
 of Youth;'  
 For Arthur, loving his young knight,  
 withheld  
 His older and his mightier from the  
 lists,  
 That Pelleas might obtain his lady's  
 love,  
 According to her promise, and re-  
 main  
 Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had  
 the jousts  
 Down in the flat field by the shore of  
 Usk  
 Holden; the gilded parapets were  
 crown'd  
 With faces, and the great tower fill'd  
 with eyes  
 Up to the summit, and the trumpets  
 blew. <sup>160</sup>  
 There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the  
 field  
 With honor; so by that strong hand  
 of his  
 The sword and golden circlet were  
 achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved;  
 the heat  
 Of pride and glory fired her face, her  
 eye  
 Sparkled; she caught the circlet from  
 his lance,  
 And there before the people crown'd  
 herself.  
 So for the last time she was gracious  
 to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space — her  
 look  
 Bright for all others, cloudier on her  
 knight — <sup>170</sup>  
 Linger'd Ettarre; and, seeing Pelleas  
 droop  
 Said Guinevere, 'We marvel at thee  
 much,  
 O damsel, wearing this unsunny  
 face  
 To him who won thee glory!' And  
 she said,  
 'Had ye not held your Lancelot in  
 your bower,  
 My Queen, he had not won.' Whereat  
 the Queen,  
 As one whose foot is bitten by an  
 ant,  
 Glanced down upon her, turn'd and  
 went her way.

But after, when her damsels, and  
 herself,  
 And those three knights all set their  
 faces home, <sup>180</sup>  
 Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw  
 him cried:  
 'Damsels — and yet I should be shamed  
 to say it —  
 I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him  
 back  
 Among yourselves. Would rather  
 that we had  
 Some rough old knight who knew the  
 worldly way,  
 Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride  
 And jest with! Take him to you,  
 keep him off,  
 And pamper him with papmeat, if ye  
 will,  
 Old milky fables of the wolf and  
 sheep,  
 Such as the wholesome mothers tell  
 their boys. <sup>190</sup>  
 Nay, should ye try him with a merry  
 one  
 To find his mettle, good; and if he  
 fly us,  
 Small matter! let him.' This her  
 damsels heard,  
 And, mindful of her small and cruel  
 hand,  
 They, closing round him thro' the  
 journey home,  
 Acted her best, and always from her  
 side

Restrain'd him with all manner of  
device,  
So that he could not come to speech  
with her.  
And when she gain'd her castle, up-  
sprang the bridge,  
Down rang the grate of iron thro' the  
groove,  
And he was left alone in open  
field.

'These be the ways of ladies,' Pel-  
leas thought,  
'To those who love them, trials of our  
faith.  
Yea, let her prove me to the utter-  
most,  
For loyal to the uttermost am I.'  
So made his moan, and, darkness fall-  
ing, sought  
A priory not far off, there lodged, but  
rose  
With morning every day, and, moist  
or dry,  
Full-arm'd upon his charger all day  
long  
Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to  
him.

And this persistence turn'd her scorn  
to wrath.  
Then, calling her three knights, she  
charged them, 'Out!  
And drive him from the walls.' And  
out they came,  
But Pelleas overthrew them as they  
dash'd  
Against him one by one; and these  
return'd,  
But still he kept his watch beneath  
the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate;  
and once,  
A week beyond, while walking on  
the walls  
With her three knights, she pointed  
downward, 'Look,  
He haunts me—I cannot breathe—  
besieges me!  
Down! strike him! put my hate into  
your strokes,  
And drive him from my walls.' And  
down they went,  
And Pelleas overthrew them one by  
one;

And from the tower above him cried  
Ettarre,  
'Bind him, and bring him in.'  
He heard her voice;  
Then let the strong hand, which had  
overthrown  
Her minion-knights, by those he over-  
threw  
Be bounden straight, and so they  
brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre,  
the sight  
Of her rich beauty made him at one  
glance  
More bondsman in his heart than in  
his bonds.  
Yet with good cheer he spake: 'Be-  
hold me, lady,  
A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;  
And if thou keep me in thy donjon  
here,  
Content am I so that I see thy face  
But once a day; for I have sworn my  
vows,  
And thou hast given thy promise, and  
I know  
That all these pains are trials of my  
faith,  
And that thyself, when thou hast seen  
me strain'd  
And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length  
Yield me thy love and know me for  
thy knight.'

Then she began to rail so bitterly,  
With all her damsels, he was stricken  
mute,  
But, when she mock'd his vows and  
the great King.  
Lighted on words: 'For pity of thine  
own self,  
Peace, lady, peace; is he not thine and  
mine?'  
'Thou fool,' she said, 'I never heard  
his voice  
But long'd to break away. Unbind him  
now,  
And thrust him out of doors; for save  
he be  
Fool to the midmost marrow of his  
bones,  
He will return no more.' And those,  
her three,  
Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust  
him from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again  
 She call'd them, saying: 'There he  
     watches yet,  
 There like a dog before his master's  
     door!  
 Kick'd, he returns; do ye not hate  
     him, ye?  
 Ye know yourselves; how can ye bide  
     at peace,  
 Affronted with his fulsome innocence?  
 Are ye but creatures of the board and  
     bed,  
 No men to strike? Fall on him all at  
     once,  
 And if ye slay him I reckon not; if ye  
     fail,  
 Give ye the slave mine order to be  
     bound,  
 Bind him as heretofore, and bring him  
     in.  
 It may be ye shall slay him in his  
     bonds.'

She spake, and at her will they  
     couch'd their spears,  
 Three against one; and Gawain pass-  
     ing by,  
 Bound upon solitary adventure, saw  
 Low down beneath the shadow of  
     those towers  
 A villainy, three to one; and thro' his  
     heart  
 The fire of honor and all noble deeds  
 Flash'd, and he call'd, 'I strike upon  
     thy side —  
 The catiffs!' 'Nay,' said Pelleas,  
     'but forbear;  
 He needs no aid who doth his lady's  
     will.'

So Gawain, looking at the villainy  
     done,  
 Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness  
 Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog,  
     withheld  
 A moment from the vermin that he  
     sees  
 Before him, shivers ere he springs and  
     kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to  
     three;  
 And they rose up, and bound, and  
     brought him in.  
 Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,  
     burn'd

Full on her knights in many an evil  
     name  
 Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten  
     hound:  
 'Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit  
     to touch,  
 Far less to bind, your victor, and  
     thrust him out,  
 And let who will release him from his  
     bonds.  
 And if he comes again' — there she  
     brake short;  
 And Pelleas answer'd: 'Lady, for in-  
     deed  
 I loved you and I deem'd you beau-  
     tiful,  
 I cannot brook to see your beauty  
     marr'd  
 Thro' evil spite; and if ye love me  
     not,  
 I cannot bear to dream you so for-  
     sworn.  
 I had liefer ye were worthy of my  
     love  
 Than to be loved again of you — fare-  
     well.  
 And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my  
     love,  
 Vex not yourself; ye will not see me  
     more.'

While thus he spake, she gazed  
     upon the man  
 Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds, and  
     thought:  
 'Why have I push'd him from me?  
     this man loves,  
 If love there be; yet him I loved not.  
     Why?  
 I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that  
     in him  
 A something — was it nobler than my-  
     self? —  
 Seem'd my reproach? He is not of  
     my kind.  
 He could not love me, did he know  
     me well.  
 Nay, let him go — and quickly.' And  
     her knights  
 Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden  
     out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed  
     him from his bonds,  
 And flung them o'er the walls; and  
     afterward,

Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's  
rag,  
'Faith of my body,' he said, 'and art  
thou not—<sup>310</sup>  
Yea thou art he, whom late our Ar-  
thur made  
Knight of his table; yea, and he that  
won  
The circlet? wherefore hast thou so  
defamed  
Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest  
As let these caitiffs on thee work their  
will?'

And Pelleas answer'd: 'O, their  
wills are hers  
For whom I won the circlet; and  
mine, hers,  
Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,  
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mock-  
ery now,  
Other than when I found her in the  
woods;<sup>320</sup>  
And tho' she hath me bounden but in  
spite,  
And all to flout me, when they bring  
me in,  
Let me be bounden, I shall see her  
face;  
Else must I die thro' mine unhappi-  
ness.'

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho'  
in scorn:  
'Why, let my lady bind me if she will,  
And let my lady beat me if she will;  
But an she send her delegate to thrall  
These fighting hands of mine— Christ  
kill me then  
But I will slice him handless by the  
wrist,<sup>330</sup>  
And let my lady sear the stump for  
him,  
Howl as he may! But hold me for  
your friend.  
Come, ye know nothing; here I pledge  
my troth,  
Yea, by the honor of the Table Round,  
I will be leal to thee and work thy  
work,  
And tame thy jailing princess to thine  
hand.  
Lend me thine horse and arms, and I  
will say  
That I have slain thee. She will let  
me in

To hear the manner of thy fight and  
fall;  
Then, when I come within her coun-  
sels, then<sup>340</sup>  
From prime to vespers will I chant  
thy praise  
As prowest knight and truest lover,  
more  
Than any have sung thee living, till  
she long  
To have thee back in lusty life  
again,  
Not to be bound, save by white bonds  
and warm,  
Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now  
thy horse  
And armor; let me go; be comforted.  
Give me three days to melt her fancy,  
and hope  
The third night hence will bring thee  
news of gold.'

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all  
his arms,<sup>350</sup>  
Saving the goodly sword, his prize,  
and took  
Gawain's, and said, 'Betray me not,  
but help—  
Art thou not he whom men call light-  
of-love?'

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be  
so light;'  
Then bounded forward to the castle  
walls,  
And raised a bugle hanging from his  
neck,  
And winded it, and that so musically  
That all the old echoes hidden in the  
wall  
Rang out like hollow woods at hunt-  
ing-tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the  
tower;<sup>360</sup>  
'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves  
thee not!'  
But Gawain lifting up his visor  
said:  
'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's  
court,  
And I have slain this Pelleas whom  
ye hate.  
Behold his horse and armor. Open  
gates.  
And I will make you merry.'

And down they ran,  
Her damsels, crying to their lady,  
'Lo!

Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that  
hath

His horse and armor; will ye let him  
in?

He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of  
the court, 370

Sir Gawain—there he waits below  
the wall,

Blowing his bugle as who should say  
him nay.'

And so, leave given, straight on  
thro' open door

Rode Gawain, whom she greeted  
courteously.

'Dead, is it so?' she ask'd. 'Ay, ay,'  
said he,

'And oft in dying cried upon your  
name.'

'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good  
knight,

But never let me bide one hour at  
peace.'

'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and you be  
fair enow;

But I to your dead man have given  
my troth, 380

That whom ye loathe, him will I  
make you love.'

So those three days, aimless about  
the land,

Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering  
waited, until the third night brought

a moon

With promise of large light on woods  
and ways.

Hot was the night and silent; but a  
sound

Of Gawain ever coming, and this lay—  
Which Pelleas had heard sung before

the Queen,

And seen her sadden listening—vext  
his heart,

And marr'd his rest—'A worm within  
the rose.' 390

'A rose, but one, none other rose had I,  
A rose, one rose, and this was wondrous

fair,  
One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth and  
sky,

One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all mine  
air—  
I cared not for the thorns; the thorns were  
there.

'One rose, a rose to gather by and by,  
One rose, a rose, to gather and to wear,  
No rose but one—what other rose had I?  
One rose, my rose; a rose that will not die,—  
He dies who loves it,—if the worm be  
there.' 400

This tender rhyme, and evermore  
the doubt,  
'Why lingers Gawain with his golden  
news?'

So shook him that he could not rest,  
but rode

Ere midnight to her walls, and bound  
his horse

Hard by the gates. Wide open were  
the gates,

And no watch kept; and in thro' these  
he past,

And heard but his own steps, and his  
own heart

Beating, for nothing moved but his  
own self

And his own shadow. Then he crost  
the court,

And spied not any light in hall or  
bower, 410

But saw the postern portal also wide  
Yawning; and up a slope of garden,

all  
Of roses white and red, and brambles  
mixt

And overgrowing them, went on, and  
found,

Here too, all hush'd below the mellow  
moon,

Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave  
Came lightning downward, and so

split itself

Among the roses and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavilions  
rear'd

Above the bushes, gilden-peakt. In  
one, 420

Red after revel, droned her lurdane  
knights

Slumbering, and their three squires  
across their feet;

In one, their malice on the placid lip  
Frozen by sweet sleep, four of her

damsels lay;

And in the third, the circlet of the  
jousts  
Bound on her brow, were Gawain and  
Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro'  
the leaf  
To find a nest and feels a snake, he  
drew;  
Back, as a coward slinks from what  
he fears  
To cope with, or a traitor proven, or  
hound 430  
Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame  
Creep with his shadow thro' the court  
again,  
Fingering at his sword-handle until  
he stood  
There on the castle-bridge once more,  
and thought,  
'I will go back, and slay them where  
they lie.'

And so went back, and seeing them  
yet in sleep  
Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the holy  
sleep,  
Your sleep is death,' and drew the  
sword, and thought,  
'What! slay a sleeping knight? the  
King hath bound  
And sworn me to this brotherhood;'  
again, 440  
'Alas that ever a knight should be so  
false!'  
Then turn'd, and so return'd, and  
groaning laid  
The naked sword athwart their naked  
throats,  
There left it, and them sleeping; and  
she lay,  
The circlet of the tourney round her  
brows,  
And the sword of the tourney across  
her throat.

And forth he past, and mounting  
on his horse  
Stared at her towers that, larger than  
themselves  
In their own darkness, throng'd into  
the moon;  
Then crush'd the saddle with his  
thighs, and clench'd 450  
His hands, and madden'd with himself  
and moan'd:

'Would they have risen against me  
in their blood  
At the last day? I might have an  
swer'd them  
Even before high God. O towers so  
strong,  
Huge, solid, would that even while I  
gaze  
The crack of earthquake shivering to  
your base  
Split you, and hell burst up your har-  
lot roofs  
Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and  
thro' within,  
Black as the harlot's heart—hollow  
as a skull!  
Let the fierce east scream thro' your  
eyelet-holes, 460  
And whirl the dust of harlots round  
and round  
In dung and nettles! hiss, snake—I  
saw him there—  
Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell!  
Who yells  
Here in the still sweet summer night  
but I—  
I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd  
her fool?  
Fool, beast—he, she, or I? myself  
most fool;  
Beast too, as lacking human wit—  
disgraced,  
Dishonor'd all for trial of true love—  
Love?—we be all alike; only the King  
Hath made us fools and liars. O  
noble vows! 470  
O great and sane and simple race of  
brutes  
That own no lust because they have  
no law!  
For why should I have loved her to  
my shame?  
I loathe her, as I loved her to my  
shame.  
I never loved her, I but lusted for  
her—  
Away!—

He dash'd the rowel into his horse,  
And bounded forth and vanish'd thro'  
the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch  
on her throat,  
Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd  
herself



To Gawain: 'Liar, for thou hast not  
slain <sup>480</sup>  
This Pelleas! here he stood, and  
might have slain  
Me and thyself.' And he that tells  
the tale  
Says that her ever-veering fancy  
turn'd  
To Pelleas, as the one true knight on  
earth  
And only lover; and thro' her love  
her life  
Wasted and pined, desiring him in  
vain.

But he by wild and way, for half  
the night,  
And over hard and soft, striking the  
sod  
From out the soft, the spark from off  
the hard,  
Rode till the star above the wakening  
sun, <sup>490</sup>  
Beside that tower where Percivale  
was cowl'd,  
Glanced from the rosy forehead of the  
dawn.  
For so the words were flash'd into his  
heart  
He knew not whence or wherefore:  
'O sweet star,  
Pure on the virgin forehead of the  
dawn!'  
And there he would have wept, but  
felt his eyes  
Harder and drier than a fountain bed  
In summer. Thither came the village  
girls  
And linger'd talking, and they came  
no more  
Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it  
from the heights <sup>500</sup>  
Again with living waters in the  
change  
Of seasons. Hard his eyes, harder  
his heart  
Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs  
that he,  
Gasping, 'Of Arthur's hall am I, but  
here,  
Here let me rest and die,' cast himself  
down,  
And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep;  
so lay,  
Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain  
fired

The hall of Merlin, and the morning  
star  
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame,  
and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some  
one nigh, <sup>510</sup>  
Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,  
crying,  
'False! and I held thee pure as Guine  
vere.'

But Percivale stood near him and  
replied,  
'Am I but false as Guinevere is  
pure?  
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or  
being one  
Of our free-spoken Table hast not  
heard  
That Lancelot' — there he check'd  
himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as  
with one  
Who gets a wound in battle, and the  
sword  
That made it plunges thro' the wound  
again, <sup>520</sup>  
And pricks it deeper; and he shrank  
and wail'd,  
'Is the Queen false?' and Percivale  
was mute.  
'Have any of our Round Table held  
their vows?'  
And Percivale made answer not a  
word.  
'Is the King true?' 'The King!'  
said Percivale.  
'Why, then let men couple at once  
with wolves.  
What! art thou mad?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,  
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his  
horse  
And fled. Small pity upon his horse  
had he,  
Or on himself, or any, and when he  
met <sup>530</sup>  
A cripple, one that held a hand for  
alms —  
Hunch'd as he was, and like an old  
dwarf-elm  
That turns its back on the salt blast,  
the boy

Paused not, but overrode him, shouting, 'False,  
 And false with Gawain!' and so left him bruised  
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and wood  
 Went ever streaming by him till the gloom  
 That follows on the turning of the world  
 Darken'd the common path. He twitch'd the reins,  
 And made his beast, that better knew it, swerve <sup>540</sup>  
 Now off it and now on; but when he saw  
 High up in heaven the hall that Merlin built,  
 Blackening against the dead-green stripes of even,  
 'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd, 'ye build too high.'

Not long thereafter from the city gates  
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,  
 Warm with a gracious parting from the Queen,  
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star  
 And marvelling what it was; on whom the boy,  
 Across the silent seeded meadow-grass <sup>550</sup>  
 Borne, clash'd; and Lancelot, saying, 'What name hast thou  
 That ridest here so blindly and so hard?'  
 'No name, no name,' he shouted, 'a scourge am I  
 To lash the treasons of the Table Round.'  
 'Yea, but thy name?' 'I have many names,' he cried:  
 'I am wrath and shame and hate and evil fame,  
 And like a poisonous wind I pass to blast  
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the Queen.'  
 'First over me,' said Lancelot, 'shalt thou pass.'  
 'Fight therefore,' yell'd the youth, and either knight <sup>560</sup>  
 Drew back a space, and when they closed, at once

The weary steed of Pelleas flounder-  
 ing flung  
 His rider, who call'd out from the dark field,  
 'Thou art false as hell; slay me, I have no sword.'  
 Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy lips — and sharp;  
 But here will I disedge it by thy death.'  
 'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is to be slain.'  
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the fallen,  
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then spake:  
 'Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say thy say.' <sup>570</sup>

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-horse back  
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while  
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark field,  
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced that both  
 Brake into hall together, worn and pale.  
 There with her knights and dames was Guinevere.  
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot  
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas, him  
 Who had not greeted her, but cast himself  
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing. 'Have ye fought?' <sup>580</sup>  
 She ask'd of Lancelot. 'Ay, my Queen,' he said.  
 'And thou hast overthrown him?' 'Ay, my Queen.'  
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, 'O young knight,  
 Hath the great heart of knighthood in thee fail'd  
 So far thou canst not bide, unforwardly,  
 A fall from *him*?' Then, for he answer'd not,  
 'Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the Queen,  
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and let me know.'  
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce

She quail'd ; and he, hissing 'I have  
     no sword,'<sup>590</sup>  
 Sprang from the door into the dark.  
     The Queen  
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on  
     her,  
 And each foresaw the dolorous day to  
     be ;  
 And all talk died, as in a grove all  
     song  
 Beneath the shadow of some bird of  
     prey.  
 Then a long silence came upon the  
     hall,  
 And Modred thought, 'The time is  
     hard at hand.'

### THE LAST TOURNAMENT

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in  
     his mood  
 Had made mock-knight of Arthur's  
     Table Round,  
 At Camelot, high above the yellowing  
     woods,  
 Danced like a wither'd leaf before the  
     hall.  
 And toward him from the hall, with  
     harp in hand,  
 And from the crown thereof a carca-  
     net  
 Of ruby swaying to and fro, the  
     prize  
 Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,  
 Came Tristram, saying, 'Why skip ye  
     so, Sir Fool ?'

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding  
     once<sup>10</sup>  
 Far down beneath a winding wall of  
     rock  
 Heard a child wail. A stump of oak  
     half-dead,  
 From roots like some black coil of  
     carven snakes,  
 Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro'  
     mid air  
 Bearing an eagle's nest ; and thro' the  
     tree  
 Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro'  
     the wind  
 Pierced ever a child's cry ; and crag  
     and tree  
 Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the peril-  
     ous nest,

This ruby necklace thrice around her  
     neck,  
 And all unscarr'd from beak or talon,  
     brought<sup>20</sup>  
 A maiden babe, which Arthur pitying  
     took,  
 Then gave it to his Queen to rear.  
     The Queen,  
 But coldly acquiescing, in her white  
     arms  
 Received, and after loved it tenderly,  
 And named it Nestling ; so forgot her  
     self  
 A moment, and her cares ; till that  
     young life  
 Being smitten in mid heaven with  
     mortal cold  
 Past from her, and in time the car-  
     canet  
 Vext her with plaintive memories of  
     the child.  
 So she, delivering it to Arthur, said, <sup>30</sup>  
 'Take thou the jewels of this dead  
     innocence,  
 And make them, an thou wilt, a  
     tourney-prize.'

To whom the King : 'Peace to  
     thine eagle-borne  
 Dead nestling, and this honor after  
     death,  
 Following thy will ! but, O my Queen,  
     I muse  
 Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or  
     zone  
 Those diamonds that I rescued from  
     the tarn,  
 And Lancelot won, methought, for  
     thee to wear.'

'Would rather you had let them  
     fall,' she cried,  
 'Plunge and be lost — ill-fated as they  
     were,<sup>40</sup>  
 A bitterness to me ! — ye look amazed,  
 Not knowing they were lost as soon as  
     given —  
 Slid from my hands when I was lean-  
     ing out  
 Above the river — that unhappy child  
 Past in her barge ; but rosier luck will  
     go  
 With these rich jewels, seeing that  
     they came  
 Not from the skeleton of a brother-  
     slayer,

But the sweet body of a maiden babe.  
Perchance — who knows? — the purest  
of thy knights  
May win them for the purest of my  
maids.' 50

She ended, and the cry of a great  
jousts  
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the  
ways  
From Camelot in among the faded  
fields  
To furthest towers; and everywhere  
the knights  
Arm'd for a day of glory before the  
King.

But on the hither side of that loud  
morn  
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage  
ribb'd  
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals,  
his nose  
Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one  
hand off,  
And one with shatter'd fingers dan-  
gling lame, 60  
A churl, to whom indignantly the  
King:

'My churl, for whom Christ died,  
what evil beast  
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy  
face? or fiend?  
Man was it who marr'd heaven's image  
in thee thus?'

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of  
splinter'd teeth,  
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with  
blunt stump  
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said  
the maim'd churl:

'He took them and he drave them  
to his tower —  
Some hold he was a table-knight of  
thine —  
A hundred goodly ones — the Red  
Knight, he — 70  
Lord, I was tending swine, and the  
Red Knight  
Brake in upon me and drave them to  
his tower;  
And when I call'd upon thy name as  
one

That doest right by gentle and by  
churl,  
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would out-  
right have slain,  
Save that he sware me to a message,  
saying:  
"Tell thou the King and all his liars  
that I  
Have founded my Round Table in the  
North,  
And whatsoever his own knights have  
sworn  
My knights have sworn the counter to  
it — and say 80  
My tower is full of harlots, like his  
court,  
But mine are worthier, seeing they  
profess  
To be none other than themselves —  
and say  
My knights are all adulterers like his  
own,  
But mine are truer, seeing they pro-  
fess  
To be none other: and say his hour is  
come,  
The heathen are upon him, his long  
lance  
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw."'

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the sen-  
eschal:  
'Take thou my churl, and tend him  
curiously 90  
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be  
whole.  
The heathen — but that ever-climbing  
wave,  
Hurl'd back again so often in empty  
foam,  
Hath lain for years at rest — and rene-  
gades,  
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confu-  
sion, whom  
The wholesome realm is purged of  
otherwise,  
Friends, thro' your manhood and your  
fealty, — now  
Make their last head like Satan in the  
North.  
My younger knights, new-made, in  
whom your flower  
Waits to be solid fruit of golden  
deeds, 100  
Move with me toward their quelling,  
which achieved,

The loneliest ways are safe from shore  
to shore.  
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my  
place  
Enchair'd to-morrow, arbitrate the  
field ;  
For wherefore shouldst thou care to  
mingle with it,  
Only to yield my Queen her own  
again ?  
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent ; is it  
well ?

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd : ' It  
is well ;  
Yet better if the King abide, and  
leave  
The leading of his younger knights to  
me.  
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is  
well.'

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot fol-  
low'd him,  
And while they stood without the  
doors, the King  
Turn'd to him, saying : ' Is it then so  
well ?  
Or mine the blame that oft I seem as  
he  
Of whom was written, " A sound is in  
his ears " ?  
The foot that loiters, bidden go, — the  
glance  
That only seems half-loyal to com-  
mand, —  
A manner somewhat fallen from rever-  
ence —  
Or have I dream'd the bearing of our  
knights  
Tells of a manhood ever less and  
lower ?  
Or whence the fear lest this my realm,  
uprear'd,  
By noble deeds at one with noble  
vows,  
From flat confusion and brute vio-  
lences,  
Reel back into the beast, and be no  
more ?'

He spoke, and taking all his younger  
knights,  
Down the slope city rode, and sharply  
turn'd

North by the gate. In her high bower  
the Queen,  
Working a tapestry, lifted up her  
head,  
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not  
that she sigh'd.  
Then ran across her memory the  
strange rhyme  
Of bygone Merlin, ' Where is he who  
knows ?  
From the great deep to the great deep  
he goes.'

But when the morning of a tourna-  
ment,  
By these in earnest those in mockery  
call'd  
The Tournament of the Dead Inno-  
cence,  
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lan-  
celot,  
Round whose sick head all night, like  
birds of prey,  
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd,  
arose,  
And down a streetway hung with folds  
of pure  
White samite, and by fountains run-  
ning wine,  
Where children sat in white with cups  
of gold,  
Moved to the lists, and there, with  
slow sad steps  
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd  
chair.

He glanced and saw the stately gal-  
leries,  
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of  
their Queen  
White-robed in honor of the stainless  
child,  
And some with scatter'd jewels, like a  
bank  
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks  
of fire.  
He look'd but once, and vail'd his eyes  
again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a  
dream  
To ears but half-awaked, then one low  
roll  
Of autumn thunder, and the jousts  
began ;

And ever the wind blew, and yellow-  
 ing leaf,  
 And gloom and gleam, and shower and  
 shorn plume  
 Went down it. Sighing wearily, as  
 one  
 Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,  
 When all the goodlier guests are past  
 away,  
 Sat their great umpire looking o'er the  
 lists.  
 He saw the laws that ruled the tourna-  
 ment <sup>160</sup>  
 Broken, but spake not; once, a knight  
 cast down  
 Before his throne of arbitration cursed  
 The dead babe and the follies of the  
 King;  
 And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,  
 And show'd him, like a vermin in its  
 hole,  
 Modred, a narrow face. Anon he  
 heard  
 The voice that billow'd round the bar-  
 riers roar  
 An ocean-sounding welcome to one  
 knight,  
 But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,  
 And armor'd all in forest green,  
 whereon <sup>170</sup>  
 There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,  
 And wearing but a holly-spray for  
 crest,  
 With ever-scattering berries, and on  
 shield  
 A spear, a harp, a bugle—Tristram  
 —late  
 From over-seas in Brittany return'd,  
 And marriage with a princess of that  
 realm,  
 Isolt the White—Sir Tristram of the  
 Woods—  
 Whom Lancelot knew, had held some-  
 time with pain  
 His own against him, and now yearn'd  
 to shake  
 The burthen off his heart in one full  
 shock <sup>180</sup>  
 With Tristram even to death. His  
 strong hands gript  
 And dinted the gilt dragons right and  
 left,  
 Until he groan'd for wrath—so many  
 of those  
 That ware their ladies' colors on the  
 casque

Drew from before Sir Tristram to the  
 bounds,  
 And there with gibes and flickering  
 mockeries  
 Stood, while he mutter'd, 'Craven  
 crests! O shame!  
 What faith have these in whom they  
 swear to love?  
 The glory of our Round Table is no  
 more.'

So Tristram won, and Lancelot  
 gave, the gems, <sup>190</sup>  
 Not speaking other word than, 'Hast  
 thou won?  
 Art thou the purest, brother? See,  
 the hand  
 Wherewith thou takest this is red!'  
 to whom  
 Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's  
 languorous mood,  
 Made answer: 'Ay, but wherefore  
 toss me this  
 Like a dry bone cast to some hungry  
 hound?  
 Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy.  
 Strength of heart  
 And might of limb, but mainly use  
 and skill,  
 Are winners in this pastime of our  
 King.  
 My hand—belike the lance hath dript  
 upon it— <sup>200</sup>  
 No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief  
 knight,  
 Right arm of Arthur in the battle-  
 field,  
 Great brother, thou nor I have made  
 the world;  
 Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in  
 mine.'

And Tristram round the gallery  
 made his horse  
 Caracole; then bow'd his homage,  
 bluntly saying,  
 'Fair damsels, each to him who wor-  
 ships each  
 Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, be-  
 hold  
 This day my Queen of Beauty is not  
 here.'  
 And most of these were mute, some  
 anger'd, one <sup>210</sup>  
 Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead.'  
 and one.

'The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt  
and mantle clung,  
And pettish cries awoke, and the wan  
day  
Went glooming down in wet and  
weariness;  
But under her black brows a swarthy  
one  
Laugh'd shrilly, crying: 'Praise the  
patient saints,  
Our one white day of Innocence hath  
past,  
Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt.  
So be it.  
The snowdrop only, flowering thro'  
the year,  
Would make the world as blank as  
wintertide.  
Come—let us gladden their sad eyes,  
our Queen's  
And Lancelot's, at this night's solemn-  
ity  
With all the kindlier colors of the  
field.'

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the  
feast  
Variously gay; for he that tells the  
tale  
Likened them, saying, as when an  
hour of cold  
Falls on the mountain in midsummer  
snows,  
And all the purple slopes of mountain  
flowers  
Pass under white, till the warm hour  
returns  
With veer of wind and all are flowers  
again,  
So dame and damsel cast the simple  
white,  
And glowing in all colors, the live  
grass,  
Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup,  
poppy, glanced  
About the revels, and with mirth so  
loud  
Beyond all use, that, half-amazed,  
the Queen,  
And wroth at Tristram and the law-  
less jousts,  
Brake up their sports, then slowly to  
her bower

Parted, and in her bosom pain was  
lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow  
morn,  
High over all the yellowing autumn-  
tide,  
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the  
hall.  
Then Tristram saying, 'Why skip ye  
so, Sir Fool?'  
Wheel'd round on either heel, Da-  
gonet replied,  
'Belike for lack of wiser company;  
Or being fool, and seeing too much wit  
Makes the world rotten, why, belike  
I skip  
To know myself the wisest knight of  
all.'  
'Ay, fool,' said Tristram, 'but 't is  
eating dry  
To dance without a catch, a roundelay  
To dance to.' Then he twangled on  
his harp,  
And while he twangled little Dagonet  
stood  
Quiet as any water-sodden log  
Stay'd in the wandering warble of a  
brook,  
But when the twangling ended, skipt  
again;  
And being ask'd, 'Why skipt ye not,  
Sir Fool?'  
Made answer, 'I had liefer twenty  
years  
Skip to the broken music of my brains  
Than any broken music thou canst  
make.'  
Then Tristram, waiting for the quip  
to come,  
'Good now, what music have I broken,  
fool?'  
And little Dagonet, skipping, 'Arthur,  
the King's;  
For when thou playest that air with  
Queen Isolt,  
Thou makest broken music with thy  
bride,  
Her daintier namesake down in Brit-  
tany—  
And so thou breakest Arthur's music  
too.'  
'Save for that broken music in thy  
brains,  
Sir Fool,' said Tristram, 'I would  
break thy head.'

Fool, I came late, the heathen wars  
were o'er,  
The life had flown, we sware but by  
the shell —<sup>270</sup>  
I am but a fool to reason with a fool —  
Come, thou art crabb'd and sour; but  
lean me down,  
Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses'  
ears,  
And harken if my music be not true.

"Free love — free field — we love but  
while we may.  
The woods are hush'd, their music is no  
more;  
The leaf is dead, the yearning past away.  
New leaf, new life — the days of frost are  
o'er;  
New life, new love, to suit the newer day;  
New loves are sweet as those that went be-  
fore.<sup>280</sup>  
Free love — free field — we love but while  
we may."

'Ye might have moved slow-measure to my tune,  
Not stood stock-still. I made it in  
the woods,  
And heard it ring as true as tested  
gold.'

But Dagonet with one foot poised  
in his hand:  
'Friend, did ye mark that fountain  
yesterday,  
Made to run wine? — but this had  
run itself  
All out like a long life to a sour  
end —  
And them that round it sat with  
golden cups  
To hand the wine to whosoever came —  
The twelve small damosels white as  
Innocence,<sup>291</sup>  
In honor of poor Innocence the babe,  
Who left the gems which Innocence  
the Queen  
Lent to the King, and Innocence the  
King  
Gave for a prize — and one of those  
white slips  
Handed her cup and piped, the pretty  
one,  
"Drink, drink, Sir Fool," and there-  
upon I drank,  
Spat — pish — the cup was gold, the  
draught was mud.'

And Tristram: 'Was it muddier  
than thy gibes?  
Is all the laughter gone dead out of  
thee? —<sup>300</sup>  
Not marking how the knighthood  
mock thee, fool —  
"Fear God: honor the King — his  
one true knight —  
Sole follower of the vows" — for here  
be they  
Who knew thee swine enow before I  
came,  
Smuttler than blasted grain. But  
when the King  
Had made thee fool, thy vanity so  
shot up  
It frightened all free fool from out thy  
heart;  
Which left thee less than fool, and  
less than swine,  
A naked aught — yet swine I hold  
thee still,  
For I have flung thee pearls and find  
thee swine.'<sup>310</sup>

And little Dagonet mincing with  
his feet:  
'Knight, an ye fling those rubies  
round my neck  
In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast  
some touch  
Of music, since I care not for thy  
pearls.  
Swine? I have wallow'd, I have  
wash'd — the world  
Is flesh and shadow — I have had my  
day.  
The dirty nurse, Experience, in her  
kind  
Hath foul'd me — an I wallow'd, then  
I wash'd —  
I have had my day and my philoso-  
phies —  
And thank the Lord I am King Ar-  
thur's fool.<sup>320</sup>  
Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses,  
rams, and geese  
Troop'd round a Paynim harper once,  
who thrumm'd  
On such a wire as musically as  
thou  
Some such fine song — but never a  
king's fool.'

And Tristram, 'Then were swine.  
goats, asses, geese



The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim  
bard  
Had such a mastery of his mystery  
That he could harp his wife up out of  
hell.'

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball  
of his foot,  
'And whither harp'st thou thine?  
down! and thyself<sup>330</sup>  
Down! and two more; a helpful  
harper thou,  
That harpest downward! Dost thou  
know the star  
We call the Harp of Arthur up in  
heaven?'

And Tristram, 'Ay, Sir Fool, for  
when our King  
Was victor wellnigh day by day, the  
knights,  
Glorying in each new glory, set his  
name  
High on all hills and in the signs of  
heaven.'

And Dagonet answer'd: 'Ay, and  
when the land  
Was freed, and the Queen false, ye  
set yourself  
To babble about him, all to show your  
wit—<sup>340</sup>  
And whether he were king by cour-  
tesy,  
Or king by right—and so went harp-  
ing down  
The black king's highway, got so far  
and grew  
So witty that ye play'd at ducks and  
drakes  
With Arthur's vows on the great lake  
of fire.  
Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the  
star?'

'Nay, fool,' said Tristram, 'not in  
open day.'  
And Dagonet: 'Nay, nor will; I see  
it and hear.  
It makes a silent music up in heaven,  
And I and Arthur and the angels  
hear,<sup>350</sup>  
And then we skip.' 'Lo, fool,' he  
said, 'ye talk  
Fool's treason; is the King thy brother  
fool?'

Then little Dagonet clapt his hands  
and shrill'd:

'Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of  
fools!  
Conceits himself as God that he can  
make  
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles,  
milk  
From burning spurge, honey from  
hornet-combs,  
And men from beasts—Long live the  
king of fools!'

And down the city Dagonet danced  
away;  
But thro' the slowly-mellowing ave-  
nues<sup>360</sup>  
And solitary passes of the wood  
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and  
the west.  
Before him fled the face of Queen  
Isolt  
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore  
Past, as a rustle or twitter in the  
wood  
Made dull his inner, keen his outer  
eye  
For all that walk'd, or crept, or  
perch'd, or flew.  
Anon the face, as, when a gust hath  
blown,  
Unruffling waters re-collect the shape  
Of one that in them sees himself, re-  
turn'd;<sup>370</sup>  
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,  
Or even a fallen feather, vanish'd  
again.

So on for all that day from lawn to  
lawn  
Thro' many a league-long bower he  
rode. At length  
A lodge of intertwined beechen-  
boughs,  
Furze-cramm'd and bracken-rooft, the  
which himself  
BUILT for a summer day with Queen  
Isolt  
Against a shower, dark in the golden  
grove  
Appearing, sent his fancy back to  
where  
She lived a moon in that low lodge  
with him;<sup>380</sup>  
Till Mark her lord had past, the Cor-  
nish King,

With six or seven, when Tristram was  
away,  
And snatch'd her thence, yet, dread-  
ing worse than shame  
Her warrior Tristram, spake not any  
word,  
But bode his hour, devising wretched-  
ness.

And now that desert lodge to Tris-  
tram lookt  
So sweet that, halting, in he past and  
sank  
Down on a drift of foliage random-  
blown ;  
But could not rest for musing how to  
smooth  
And sleek his marriage over to the  
queen. <sup>390</sup>  
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from  
all  
The tonguesters of the court she had  
not heard.  
But then what folly had sent him over-  
seas  
After she left him lonely here ? a  
name ?  
Was it the name of one in Brittany,  
Isolt, the daughter of the king ?  
' Isolt  
Of the White Hands' they call'd her :  
the sweet name  
Allured him first, and then the maid  
herself,  
Who served him well with those white  
hands of hers,  
And loved him well, until himself had  
thought <sup>400</sup>  
He loved her also, wedded easily,  
But left her all as easily, and return'd.  
The black-blue Irish hair and Irish  
eyes  
Had drawn him home — what marvel ?  
then he laid  
His brows upon the drifted leaf and  
dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of  
Brittany  
Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,  
And show'd them both the ruby-chain,  
and both  
Began to struggle for it, till his  
queen  
Graspt it so hard that all her hand was  
red. <sup>410</sup>

Then cried the Breton, 'Look, her  
hand is red !  
These be no rubies, this is frozen  
blood,  
And melts within her hand — her hand  
is hot  
With ill desires, but this I gave thee,  
look,  
Is all as cool and white as any flower.'  
Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and  
then  
A whimpering of the spirit of the  
child,  
Because the twain had spoil'd her car-  
canet.

He dream'd ; but Arthur with a  
hundred spears  
Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,  
And many a glancing plash and sal-  
lowy isle, <sup>421</sup>  
The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty  
marsh  
Glared on a huge machicolated tower  
That stood with open doors, whereout  
was roll'd  
A roar of riot, as from men secure  
Amid their marshes, ruffians at their  
ease  
Among their harlot-brides, an evil  
song.  
' Lo there,' said one of Arthur's youth,  
for there,  
High on a grim dead tree before the  
tower,  
A goodly brother of the Table Round  
Swung by the neck ; and on the  
boughs a shield <sup>431</sup>  
Showing a shower of blood in a field  
noir,  
And therebeside a horn, inflamed the  
knights  
At that dishonor done the gilded  
spur,  
Till each would clash the shield and  
blow the horn.  
But Arthur waved them back. Alone  
he rode.  
Then at the dry harsh roar of the  
great horn,  
That sent the face of all the marsh  
aloft  
An ever upward-rushing storm and  
cloud  
Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight  
heard, and all, <sup>440</sup>

Even to tipmost lance and topmost  
helm,  
In blood-red armor sallying, how'd to  
the King :

'The teeth of Hell flay bare and  
gnash thee flat !—  
Lo ! art thou not that eunuch-hearted  
king  
Who fain had clipt free manhood from  
the world —  
The woman-worshipper ? Yea, God's  
curse, and I !  
Slain was the brother of my paramour  
By a knight of thine, and I that heard  
her whine  
And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,  
Sware by the scorpion-worm that  
twists in hell <sup>450</sup>  
And stings itself to everlasting death,  
To hang whatever knight of thine I  
fought  
And tumbled. Art thou king ? — Look  
to thy life !'

He ended. Arthur knew the voice ;  
the face  
Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the  
name  
Went wandering somewhere darkling  
in his mind.  
And Arthur deign'd not use of word  
or sword,  
But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd  
from horse  
To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,  
Down from the causeway heavily to  
the swamp <sup>460</sup>  
Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching  
wave,  
Heard in dead night along that table-  
shore,  
Drops flat, and after the great waters  
break  
Whitening for half a league, and thin  
themselves,  
Far over sands marbled with moon  
and cloud,  
From less and less to nothing ; thus  
he fell  
Head-heavy. Then the knights, who  
watch'd him, roar'd .  
And shouted and leapt down upon  
the fallen,  
There trampled out his face from be-  
ing known,

And sank his head in mire, and slided  
themselves :  
Nor heard the King for their <sup>470</sup>  
cries, but sprang  
Thro' open doors, and swording right  
and left  
Men, women, on their sodden faces,  
hurl'd  
The tables over and the wines, and  
slew  
Till all the rafters rang with woman-  
yells,  
And all the pavement stream'd with  
massacre.  
Then, echoing yell with yell, they  
fired the tower,  
Which half that autumn night, like  
the live North,  
Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and Alcor,  
Made all above it, and a hundred  
meres <sup>480</sup>  
About it, as the water Moab saw  
Come round by the east, and out be-  
yond them flush'd  
The long low dune and lazy-plunging  
sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore  
to shore,  
But in the heart of Arthur pain was  
lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the  
red dream  
Fled with a shout, and that low lodge  
return'd,  
Mid-forest, and the wind among the  
boughs.  
He whistled his good war-horse left to  
graze  
Among the forest greens, vaulted upon  
him, <sup>490</sup>  
And rode beneath an ever-showering  
leaf,  
Till one lone woman, weeping near a  
cross,  
Stay'd him. 'Why weep ye ?' 'Lord,'  
she said, 'my man  
Hath left me or is dead ;' whereon he  
thought —  
'What, if she hate me now ? I would  
not this.  
What, if she love me still ? I would  
not that.  
I know not what I would' — but said  
to her,

'Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate  
 return,  
 He find thy favor changed and love  
 thee not' —  
 Then pressing day by day thro' Lyon-  
 nesse <sup>500</sup>  
 Last in a roky hollow, belling, heard  
 The hounds of Mark, and felt the  
 goodly hounds  
 Yelp at his heart, but, turning, past  
 and gain'd  
 Tintagil, half in sea and high on land,  
 A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,  
 A low sea-sunset glorying round her  
 hair  
 And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the  
 queen.  
 And when she heard the feet of Tris-  
 tram grind  
 The spiring stone that scaled about  
 her tower,  
 Flush'd, started, met him at the doors,  
 and there <sup>510</sup>  
 Belted his body with her white em-  
 brace,  
 Crying aloud : 'Not Mark — not Mark,  
 my soul !  
 The footstep flutter'd me at first — not  
 he !  
 Catlike thro' his own castle steals my  
 Mark,  
 But warrior-wise thou stridest thro'  
 his halls  
 Who hates thee, as I him — even to  
 the death.  
 My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark  
 Quicken within me, and knew that  
 thou wert nigh.'  
 To whom Sir Tristram smiling, 'I am  
 here ;  
 Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine.'

And drawing somewhat backward  
 she replied : <sup>521</sup>  
 'Can he be wrong'd who is not even  
 his own,  
 But save for dread of thee had beaten  
 me,  
 Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me  
 somehow — Mark ?  
 What rights are his that dare not  
 strike for them ?  
 Not lift a hand — not, tho' he found  
 me thus !

But harken ! have ye met him ? hence  
 he went  
 To-day for three days' hunting — as  
 he said —  
 And so returns belike within an hour.  
 Mark's way, my soul ! — but eat not  
 thou with Mark, <sup>530</sup>  
 Because he hates thee even more than  
 fears,  
 Nor drink ; and when thou passest any  
 wood  
 Close vizer, lest an arrow from the  
 bush  
 Should leave me all alone with Mark  
 and hell.  
 My God, the measure of my hate for  
 Mark  
 Is as the measure of my love for thee !'

So, pluck'd one way by hate and  
 one by love,  
 Drain'd of her force, again she sat,  
 and spake  
 To Tristram, as he knelt before her,  
 saying :  
 'O hunter, and O blower of the horn,  
 Harper, and thou hast been a rover  
 too, <sup>541</sup>  
 For, ere I mated with my shambling  
 king,  
 Ye twain had fallen out about the  
 bride  
 Of one — his name is out of me — the  
 prize,  
 If prize she were — what marvel ? —  
 she could see —  
 Thine, friend ; and ever since my  
 craven seeks  
 To wreck thee villainously — but, O  
 Sir Knight,  
 What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd  
 to last ?'

And Tristram, 'Last to my Queen  
 Paramount,  
 Here now to my queen paramount of  
 love <sup>550</sup>  
 And loveliness — ay, lovelier than  
 when first  
 Her light feet fell on our rough Lyon-  
 nesse,  
 Sailing from Ireland.'

Softly laugh'd Isolt :  
 'Flatter me not, for hath not our great  
 Queen

My dole of beauty trebled?' and he said:

'Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,

And thine is more to me — soft, gracious, kind —

Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy lips

Most gracious; but she, haughty, even to him,

Lancelot; for I have seen him wan enow

To make one doubt if ever the great Queen

Have yielded him her love.'

To whom Isolt:

'Ah, then, false hunter and false harper, thou

Who brakest thro' the scruple of my bond,

Calling me thy white hind, and saying to me

That Guinevere had sinn'd against the highest,

And I — misyoked with such a want of man —

That I could hardly sin against the lowest.'

He answer'd: 'O my soul, be comforted!

If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings,

If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,

Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning sin

That made us happy; but how ye greet me — fear

And fault and doubt — no word of that fond tale —

Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet memories

Of Tristram in that year he was away.'

And, saddening on the sudden, spake Isolt:

'I had forgotten all in my strong joy To see thee — yearnings? — ay! for,

hour by hour,

Here in the never-ended afternoon, 580 O, sweeter than all memories of thee, Deeper than any yearnings after thee

Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-smiling seas,

Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of Britain dash'd

Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,

Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss? Wedded her?

Fought in her father's battles? wounded there?

The King was all fulfill'd with gratefulness,

And she, my namesake of the hands, that heal'd

Thy hurt and heart with unguent and caress —

Well — can I wish her any huger wrong

Than having known thee? her too hast thou left

To pine and waste in those sweet memories.

O, were I not my Mark's, by whom all men

Are noble, I should hate thee more than love.'

And Tristram, fondling her light hands, replied:

'Grace, queen, for being loved; she loved me well.

Did I love her? the name at least I loved.

Isolt? — I fought his battles, for Isolt!

The night was dark; the true star set. Isolt!

The name was ruler of the dark — Isolt?

Care not for her! patient, and prayerful, meek,

Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to God.'

And Isolt answer'd: 'Yea, and why not I?

Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,

Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell thee now.

Here one black, mute midsummer night I sat,

Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering where,

Murmuring a light song I had heard thee sing,

And once or twice I spake thy name aloud.

Then flash'd a levin-brand ; and near  
me stood,  
In fuming sulphur blue and green, a  
fiend —  
Mark's way to steal behind one in the  
dark —  
For there was Mark : " He has wedded  
her," he said,  
Not said, but hiss'd it ; then this  
crown of towers  
So shook to such a roar of all the  
sky,  
That here in utter dark I swoon'd  
away,  
And woke again in utter dark, and  
cried,  
" I will flee hence and give myself to  
God " —  
And thou wert lying in thy new  
leman's arms.' 620

Then Tristram, ever dallying with  
her hand,  
' May God be with thee, sweet, when  
old and gray,  
And past desire ! ' a saying that an-  
ger'd her.  
" " May God be with thee, sweet, when  
thou art old,  
And sweet no more to me ! " I need  
Him now.  
For when had Lancelot utter'd aught  
so gross  
Even to the swineherd's malkin in the  
mast ?  
The greater man the greater cour-  
tesy.  
Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's  
knight !  
But thou thro' ever harrying thy wild  
beasts — 630  
Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a  
lance  
Becomes thee well — art grown wild  
beast thyself.  
How darrest thou, if lover, push me  
even  
In fancy from thy side, and set me  
far  
In the gray distance, half a life  
away,  
Her to be loved no more ? Unsay it,  
unswear !  
Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,  
Broken with Mark and hate and soli-  
tude,

Thy marriage and mine own, that I  
should suck  
Lies like sweet wines. Lie to me ; I  
believe. 640  
Will ye not lie ? not swear, as there  
ye kneel,  
And solemnly as when ye swear to him,  
The man of men, our King — My  
God, the power  
Was once in vows when men believed  
the King !  
They lied not then who swear, and  
thro' their vows  
The King prevailing made his realm  
— I say,  
Swear to me thou wilt love me even  
when old,  
Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in  
despair.'

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up  
and down :  
' Vows ! did you keep the vow you  
made to Mark 650  
More than I mine ? Lied, say ye ?  
Nay, but learnt,  
The vow that binds too strictly snaps  
itself —  
My knighthood taught me this — ay,  
being snapt —  
We run more counter to the soul  
thereof  
Than had we never sworn. I swear  
no more.  
I swore to the great King and am for-  
sworn.  
For once — even to the height — I  
honor'd him.  
" Man, is he man at all ? " methought,  
when first  
I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and  
beheld  
That victor of the Pagan throned in  
hall — 660  
His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a  
brow  
Like hill-snow high in heaven, the  
steel-blue eyes,  
The golden beard that clothed his lips  
with light —  
Moreover, that weird legend of his  
birth,  
With Merlin's mystic babble about his  
end  
Amazed me ; then, his foot was on a  
stool

Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me  
     no man,  
 But Michael trampling Satan; so I  
     sware,  
 Being amazed. But this went by —  
     The vows!  
 O, ay — the wholesome madness of an  
     hour — <sup>670</sup>  
 They served their use, their time; for  
     every knight  
 Believed himself a greater than him-  
     self,  
 And every follower eyed him as a  
     God;  
 Till he, being lifted up beyond him-  
     self,  
 Did mightier deeds than elsewhere he  
     had done,  
 And so the realm was made. But then  
     their vows —  
 First mainly thro' that sullyng of our  
     Queen —  
 Began to gall the knighthood, asking  
     whence  
 Had Arthur right to bind them to  
     himself?  
 Dropt down from heaven? wash'd  
     up from out the deep? <sup>680</sup>  
 They fail'd to trace him thro' the flesh  
     and blood  
 Of our old kings. Whence then? a  
     doubtful lord  
 To bind them by inviolable vows,  
 With flesh and blood perforce would  
     violate;  
 For feel this arm of mine — the tide  
     within  
 Red with free chase and heather-  
     scented air,  
 Pulsing full man. Can Arthur make  
     me pure  
 As any maiden child? lock up my  
     tongue  
 From uttering freely what I freely  
     hear?  
 Bind me to one? The wide world  
     laughs at it. <sup>690</sup>  
 And worldling of the world am I, and  
     know  
 The ptarmigan that whitens ere his  
     hour  
 Woos his own end; we are not angels  
     here  
 Nor shall be. Vows — I am wood-  
     man of the woods,  
 And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale

Mock them — my soul, we love but  
     while we may;  
 And therefore is my love so large for  
     thee,  
 Seeing it is not bounded save by love.'

Here ending, he moved toward her,  
     and she said:  
 'Good: an I turn'd away my love for  
     thee <sup>700</sup>  
 To some one thrice as courteous as  
     thyself —  
 For courtesy wins woman all as  
     well  
 As valor may, but he that closes  
     both  
 Is perfect, he is Lancelot — taller in-  
     deed,  
 Rosier and comelier, thou — but say I  
     loved  
 This knightliest of all knights, and  
     cast thee back  
 Thine own small saw, "We love but  
     while we may,"  
 Well then, what answer?'

He that while she spake,  
 Mindful of what he brought to adorn  
     her with,  
 The jewels, had let one finger lightly  
     touch <sup>710</sup>  
 The warm white apple of her throat,  
     replied,  
 'Press this a little closer, sweet, un-  
     til —  
 Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd  
     — meat,  
 Wine, wine — and I will love thee to  
     the death,  
 And out beyond into the dream to  
     come.'

So then, when both were brought  
     to full accord,  
 She rose, and set before him all he  
     will'd;  
 And after these had comforted the  
     blood  
 With meats and wines, and satiated  
     their hearts —  
 Now talking of their woodland para-  
     dise, <sup>720</sup>  
 The deer, the dews, the fern, the  
     founts, the lawns;  
 Now mocking at the much ungainli-  
     ness,

And craven shifts, and long crane legs  
of Mark —  
Then Tristram laughing caught the  
harp and sang:

‘Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that bend  
the brier!  
A star in heaven, a star within the mere!  
Ay, ay, O, ay — a star was my desire,  
And one was far apart and one was near.  
Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that bow the  
grass!  
And one was water and one star was fire,  
And one will ever shine and one will pass.  
Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that move the  
mere!’

Then in the light's last glimmer  
Tristram show'd  
And swung the ruby carcanet. She  
cried,  
‘The collar of some Order, which our  
King  
Hath newly founded, all for thee, my  
soul,  
For thee, to yield thee grace beyond  
thy peers.’

‘Not so, my queen,’ he said, ‘but  
the red fruit  
Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-  
heaven,  
And won by Tristram as a tourney-  
prize,  
And hither brought by Tristram for  
his last  
Love-offering and peace-offering unto  
thee.’

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging  
round her neck,  
Claspt it, and cried, ‘Thine Order, O  
my queen!’  
But, while he bow'd to kiss the  
jewell'd throat,  
Out of the dark, just as the lips had  
touch'd,  
Behind him rose a shadow and a  
shriek —  
‘Mark's way,’ said Mark, and clove  
him thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and  
while he climb'd,  
All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping  
gloom,  
The stairway to the hall, and look'd  
and saw

The great Queen's bower was dark, —  
about his feet  
A voice clung sobbing till he ques-  
tion'd it,  
‘What art thou?’ and the voice about  
his feet  
Sent up an answer, sobbing, ‘I am  
thy fool,  
And I shall never make thee smile  
again.’

## GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court,  
and sat  
There in the holy house at Almesbury  
Weeping, none with her save a little  
maid,  
A novice. One low light betwixt them  
burn'd  
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all  
abroad,  
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,  
The white mist, like a face-cloth to  
the face,  
Clung to the dead earth, and the land  
was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of  
flight  
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle  
beast  
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the  
throne,  
Ready to spring, waiting a chance.  
For this  
He chill'd the popular praises of the  
King  
With silent smiles of slow disparage-  
ment;  
And tamper'd with the Lords of the  
White Horse,  
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left:  
and sought  
To make disruption in the Table Round  
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds  
Serving his traitorous end; and all his  
aims  
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for  
Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when  
all the court,  
Green-suited, but with plumes that  
mock'd the may,



Had been — their wont — a-maying  
 and return'd,  
 That Modred still in green, all ear and  
 eye,  
 Climb'd to the high top of the garden-  
 wall  
 To spy some secret scandal if he might,  
 And saw the Queen who sat betwixt  
 her best  
 Enid and lissome Vivien, of her court  
 The wildest and the worst; and more  
 than this  
 He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing  
 by  
 Spied where he couch'd, and as the <sup>30</sup>  
 gardener's hand  
 Picks from the colewort a green cater-  
 pillar,  
 So from the high wall and the flower-  
 ing grove  
 Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by  
 the heel,  
 And cast him as a worm upon the way;  
 But when he knew the prince tho'  
 marr'd with dust,  
 He, reverencing king's blood in a bad  
 man,  
 Made such excuses as he might, and  
 these  
 Full knightly without scorn. For in  
 those days  
 No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in  
 scorn;  
 But, if a man were halt, or hunch'd, <sup>40</sup>  
 in him  
 By those whom God had made full-  
 limb'd and tall,  
 Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,  
 And he was answer'd softly by the  
 King  
 And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot help  
 To raise the prince, who rising twice  
 or thrice  
 Full sharply smote his knees, and  
 smiled, and went;  
 But, ever after, the small violence done  
 Rankled in him and ruffled all his  
 heart,  
 As the sharp wind that ruffles all day  
 long  
 A little bitter pool about a stone <sup>50</sup>  
 On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told  
 This matter to the Queen, at first she  
 laugh'd

Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty  
 fall,  
 Then shudder'd, as the village wife  
 who cries,  
 'I shudder, some one steps across my  
 grave;'  
 Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for  
 indeed  
 She half-foresaw that he, the subtle  
 beast,  
 Would track her guilt until he found,  
 and hers  
 Would be for evermore a name of scorn.  
 Henceforward rarely could she front  
 in hall, <sup>61</sup>  
 Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy  
 face,  
 Heart-hiding smile and gray persis-  
 tent eye.  
 Henceforward too, the Powers that  
 tend the soul,  
 To help it from the death that cannot  
 die,  
 And save it even in extremes, began  
 To vex and plague her. Many a time  
 for hours,  
 Beside the placid breathings of the  
 King,  
 In the dead night, grim faces came  
 and went  
 Before her, or a vague spiritual fear —  
 Like to some doubtful noise of creak-  
 ing doors, <sup>71</sup>  
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted  
 house,  
 That keeps the rust of murder on the  
 walls —  
 Held her awake; or if she slept she  
 dream'd  
 An awful dream, for then she seem'd  
 to stand  
 On some vast plain before a setting sun,  
 And from the sun there swiftly made  
 at her  
 A ghastly something, and its shadow  
 flew  
 Before it till it touch'd her, and she  
 turn'd —  
 When lo! her own, that broadening  
 from her feet, <sup>80</sup>  
 And blackening, swallow'd all the  
 land, and in it  
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she  
 woke.  
 And all this trouble did not pass but  
 grew,

Till even the clear face of the guile-  
less King,  
And trustful courtesies of household  
life,  
Became her bane; and at the last she  
said:  
'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine  
own land,  
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
And if we meet again some evil chance  
Will make the smouldering scandal  
break and blaze

90

Before the people and our lord the  
King.  
And Lancelot ever promised, but re-  
main'd,  
And still they met and met. Again  
she said,  
'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee  
hence.'  
And then they were agreed upon a  
night—  
When the good King should not be  
there—to meet



'They rode to the divided way  
'There kiss'd, and parted weeping'

And part for ever. Vivien, lurking,  
 heard.  
 She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale  
 they met  
 And greeted. Hands in hands, and  
 eye to eye,  
 Low on the border of her couch they  
 sat<sup>100</sup>  
 Stammering and staring. It was their  
 last hour,  
 A madness of farewells. And Modred  
 brought  
 His creatures to the basement of the  
 tower  
 For testimony; and crying with full  
 voice,  
 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at  
 last,' aroused  
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lion-  
 like  
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him head-  
 long, and he fell  
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and  
 bare him off,  
 And all was still. Then she, 'The end  
 is come,  
 \*And I am shamed for ever;' and he  
 said:<sup>110</sup>  
 'Mine be the shame, mine was the  
 sin; but rise,  
 And fly to my strong castle over-seas.  
 There will I hide thee till my life shall  
 end,  
 There hold thee with my life against  
 the world.'  
 She answer'd: 'Lancelot, wilt thou  
 hold me so?  
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our  
 farewells.  
 Would God that thou couldst hide me  
 from myself!  
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife,  
 and thou  
 Unwedded; yet rise now, and let us fly,  
 For I will draw me into sanctuary,<sup>120</sup>  
 And bide my doom.' So Lancelot got  
 her horse,  
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his  
 own,  
 And then they rode to the divided way,  
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping; for  
 he past,  
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the  
 Queen,  
 Back to his land; but she to Almes-  
 bury

Fled all night long by glimmering  
 waste and weald,  
 And heard the spirits of the waste  
 and weald  
 Moan as she fled, or thought she heard  
 them moan.  
 And in herself she moan'd, 'Too late,  
 too late!'<sup>130</sup>  
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the  
 morn,  
 A blot in heaven, the raven, flying  
 high,  
 Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies  
 a field of death;  
 For now the heathen of the Northern  
 Sea,  
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of  
 the court,  
 Begin to slay the folk and spoil the  
 land.'

And when she came to Almesbury  
 she spake  
 There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine  
 enemies  
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sister-  
 hood,  
 Receive and yield me sanctuary, nor  
 ask<sup>140</sup>  
 Her name to whom ye yield it till her  
 time  
 To tell you;' and her beauty, grace,  
 and power  
 Wrought as a charm upon them, and  
 they spared  
 To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode  
 For many a week, unknown, among  
 the nuns,  
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her  
 name, nor sought,  
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for  
 shrift,  
 But communed only with the little  
 maid,  
 Who pleased her with a babbling  
 heedlessness  
 Which often lured her from herself;  
 but now,<sup>150</sup>  
 This night, a rumor wildly blown  
 about  
 Came that Sir Modred had usurp'd  
 the realm  
 And leagued him with the heathen,  
 while the King

Was waging war on Lancelot. Then  
 she thought,  
 'With what a hate the people and the  
 King  
 Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon  
 her hands  
 Silent, until the little maid, who  
 brook'd  
 No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late!  
 so late!  
 What hour, I wonder now?' and  
 when she drew  
 No answer, by and by began to hum  
 An air the nuns had taught her:  
 'Late, so late!' <sup>161</sup>  
 Which when she heard, the Queen  
 look'd up, and said,  
 'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,  
 Sing, and unbind my heart that I  
 may weep.'  
 Whereat full willingly sang the little  
 maid.

'Late, late, so late! and dark the night  
 and chill!  
 Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.  
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light had we; for that we do repent,  
 And learning this, the bridegroom will re-  
 lent. <sup>170</sup>  
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light! so late! and dark and chill  
 the night!  
 O, let us in, that we may find the light!  
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is so  
 sweet?  
 O, let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!  
 No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'

So sang the novice, while full pas-  
 sionately,  
 Her head upon her hands, remember-  
 ing  
 Her thought when first she came,  
 wept the sad Queen. <sup>180</sup>  
 Then said the little novice prattling  
 to her:

'O pray you, noble lady, weep no  
 more;  
 But let my words—the words of one  
 so small,  
 Who knowing nothing knows but to  
 obey,

And if I do not there is penance  
 given—  
 Comfort your sorrows, for they do  
 not flow  
 From evil done; right sure am I of  
 that,  
 Who see your tender grace and state-  
 liness.  
 But weigh your sorrows with our lord  
 the King's,  
 And weighing find them less; for gone  
 is he <sup>190</sup>  
 To wage grim war against Sir Lance-  
 lot there,  
 Round that strong castle where he  
 holds the Queen;  
 And Modred whom he left in charge  
 of all,  
 The traitor—Ah, sweet lady, the  
 King's grief  
 For his own self, and his own Queen,  
 and realm,  
 Must needs be thrice as great as any  
 of ours!  
 For me, I thank the saints, I am not  
 great;  
 For if there ever come a grief to me  
 I cry my cry in silence, and have  
 done;  
 None knows it, and my tears have  
 brought me good. <sup>200</sup>  
 But even were the griefs of little  
 ones  
 As great as those of great ones, yet  
 this grief  
 Is added to the griefs the great must  
 bear,  
 That, howsoever much they may de-  
 sire  
 Silence, they cannot weep behind a  
 cloud;  
 As even here they talk at Almesbury  
 About the good King and his wicked  
 Queen,  
 And were I such a King with such a  
 Queen,  
 Well might I wish to veil her wicked-  
 ness,  
 But were I such a King it could not  
 be. <sup>210</sup>

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd  
 the Queen,  
 'Will the child kill me with her inno-  
 cent talk?'  
 But openly she answer'd, 'Must not I,

If this false traitor have displaced his lord,  
Grieve with the common grief of all the realm ?'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'this all is woman's grief,  
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life  
Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round  
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,  
With signs and miracles and wonders, there<sup>220</sup>  
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.'

Then thought the Queen within herself again,  
'Will the child kill me with her foolish prate ?'  
But openly she spake and said to her,  
'O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,  
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,  
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs  
And simple miracles of thy nunnery ?'

To whom the little novice garrulously :  
'Yea, but I know ; the land was full of signs<sup>230</sup>  
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.  
So said my father, and himself was knight  
Of the great Table — at the founding of it,  
And rode thereto from Lyonesse ; and he said  
That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain  
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard  
Strange music, and he paused, and turning — there,  
All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,  
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,  
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,<sup>240</sup>  
He saw them — headland after headland flame  
Far on into the rich heart of the west.

And in the light the white mermaiden swam,  
And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,  
And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,  
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft  
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.  
So said my father — yea, and furthermore,  
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit woods  
Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy<sup>250</sup>  
Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,  
That shook beneath them as the thistle shakes  
When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed.  
And still at evenings on before his horse  
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke  
Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke  
Flying, for all the land was full of life.  
And when at last he came to Camelot,  
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand  
Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall ;<sup>260</sup>  
And in the hall itself was such a feast  
As never man had dream'd ; for every knight  
Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served  
By hands unseen ; and even as he said  
Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts  
While the wine ran ; so glad were spirits and men  
Before the coming of the sinful Queen.'

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly,  
'Were they so glad ? ill prophets were they all,<sup>270</sup>  
Spirits and men. Could none of them foresee,  
Not even thy wise father with his signs

And wonders, what has fallen upon the realm ?'

To whom the novice garrulously again:

'Yea, one, a bard, of whom my father said,

Full many a noble war-song had he sung,

Even in the presence of an enemy's fleet,

Between the steep cliff and the coming wave ;

And many a mystic lay of life and death

Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops, <sup>280</sup>

When round him bent the spirits of the hills

With all their dewy hair blown back like flame.

So said my father — and that night the bard

Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King

As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at those

Who call'd him the false son of Golois.

For there was no man knew from whence he came ;

But after tempest, when the long wave broke

All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,

There came a day as still as heaven, and then <sup>290</sup>

They found a naked child upon the sands

Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea, And that was Arthur, and they foster'd him

Till he by miracle was approven King ; And that his grave should be a mystery

From all men, like his birth ; and could he find

A woman in her womanhood as great As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,

The twain together well might change the world.

But even in the middle of his song <sup>300</sup> He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,

And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fallen,

But that they stay'd him up ; nor would tell

His vision ; but what doubt that he foresaw

This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen ?'

Then thought the Queen, 'Lo ! they have set her on,

Our simple-seeming abbess and her nuns,

To play upon me,' and bow'd her head nor spake.

Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,

Shame on her own garrulity garrulously, <sup>310</sup>

Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue

Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,

Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales

Which my good father told me, check me too

Nor let me shame my father's memory, one

Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say

Sir Lancelot had the noblest ; and he died,

Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,

And left me ; but of others who remain, <sup>320</sup>

And of the two first-famed for courtesy —

And pray you check me if I ask amiss —

But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved.

Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King ?'

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her :

'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,

Was gracious to all ladies, and the same

In open battle or the tilting-field Forbore his own advantage, and the King

In open battle or the tilting-field <sup>330</sup> Forbore his own advantage, and these two

Were the most nobly-manner'd men of  
all;  
For manners are not idle, but the  
fruit  
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be manners  
such fair fruit?  
Then Lancelot's needs must be a thou-  
sand-fold  
Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,  
The most disloyal friend in all the  
world.'

To which a mournful answer made  
the Queen:  
'O, closed about by narrowing nun-  
nery-walls, <sup>340</sup>  
What knowest thou of the world and  
all its lights  
And shadows, all the wealth and all  
the woe?  
If ever Lancelot, that most noble  
knight,  
Were for one hour less noble than him-  
self,  
Pray for him that he scape the doom  
of fire,  
And weep for her who drew him to  
his doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray  
for both;  
But I should all as soon believe that  
his,  
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the  
King's,  
As I could think, sweet lady, yours  
would be <sup>350</sup>  
Such as they are, were you the sinful  
Queen.'

So she, like many another babbler,  
hurt  
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd  
where she would heal;  
For here a sudden flush of wrathful  
heat  
Fired all the pale face of the Queen,  
who cried:  
'Such as thou art be never maiden  
more  
For ever! thou their tool, set on to  
plague  
And play upon and harry me, petty  
spy

And traitress!' When that storm of  
anger brake  
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden  
rose, <sup>360</sup>  
White as her veil, and stood before  
the Queen  
As tremulously as foam upon the  
beach  
Stands in a wind, ready to break and  
fly,  
And when the Queen had added, 'Get  
thee hence!'  
Fled frightened. Then that other left  
alone  
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart  
again,  
Saying in herself: 'The simple, fear-  
ful child  
Meant nothing, but my own too-fear-  
ful guilt,  
Simpler than any child, betrays it-  
self.  
But help me, Heaven, for surely I re-  
pent! <sup>370</sup>  
For what is true repentance but in  
thought—  
Not even in inmost thought to think  
again  
The sins that made the past so plea-  
sant to us?  
And I have sworn never to see him  
more, <sup>380</sup>  
To see him more.' <sup>ern</sup>

And even in saying this,  
Her memory from old <sup>380</sup> of the  
mind  
Went slipping back <sup>381</sup> the golden  
days  
In which she saw him first, when Lan-  
celot came,  
Reputed the best knight and goodliest  
man,  
Ambassador, to yield her to his lord  
Arthur, and led her forth, and far  
ahead <sup>381</sup>  
Of his and her retinue moving, they,  
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on  
love  
And sport and tilts and pleasure, —  
for the time  
Was may-time, and as yet no sin was  
dream'd, —  
Rode under groves that look'd a para-  
dise  
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth

That seem'd the heavens unbreking  
thro' the earth,  
And on from hill to hill, and every  
day  
Beheld at noon in some delicious  
dale<sup>390</sup>  
The silk pavilions of King Arthur  
raised  
For brief repast or afternoon repose  
By couriers gone before; and on  
again,  
Till yet once more ere set of sun they  
saw  
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-  
ship,  
That crown'd the state pavilion of the  
King,  
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent  
well.

But when the Queen immersed in  
such a trance,  
And moving thro' the past uncon-  
sciously,  
Came to that point where first she saw  
the King<sup>400</sup>  
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd  
to find  
Her journey done, glanced at him,  
thought him cold,  
High, self-contain'd, and passionless,  
not like him,  
'Not like my Lancelot' — while she  
brooded thus  
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts  
again,  
There rode an armed warrior to the  
doors.  
A murmuring whisper thro' the nun-  
nery ran,  
Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King!'  
She sat  
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when  
armed feet  
Thro' the long gallery from the outer  
doors<sup>410</sup>  
Rang coming, prone from off her seat  
she fell,  
And grovelling with her face against  
the floor.  
There with her milk-white arms and  
shadowy hair  
She made her face a darkness from  
the King,  
And in the darkness heard his armed  
feet

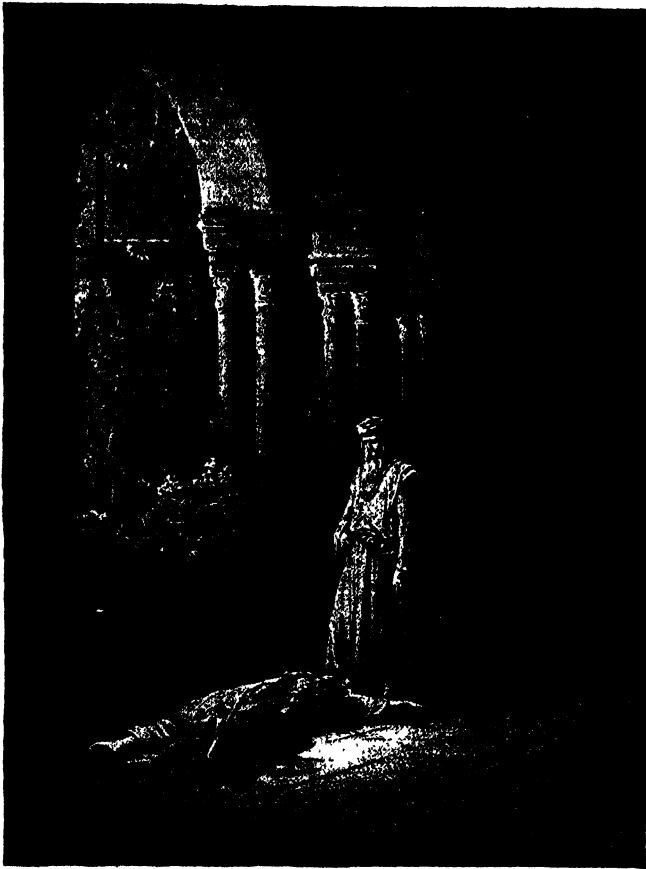
Pause by her; then came silence, then  
a voice,  
Monotonous and hollow like a ghost's  
Denouncing judgment, but, tho'  
changed, the King's:

'Liest thou here so low, the child of  
one  
I honor'd, happy, dead before thy  
shame?<sup>420</sup>  
Well is it that no child is born of thee.  
The children born of thee are sword  
and fire,  
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,  
The craft of kindred and the godless  
hosts  
Of heathen swarming o'er the North-  
ern Sea;  
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my  
right arm,  
The mightiest of my knights, abode  
with me,  
Have everywhere about this land of  
Christ  
In twelve great battles ruining over-  
thrown.  
And knowest thou now from whence  
I come — from him,<sup>430</sup>  
From waging bitter war with him;  
and he,  
That did not shun to smite me in  
worse way,  
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him  
left,  
He spared to lift his hand against the  
King  
Who made him knight. But many a  
knight was slain;  
And many more and all his kith and  
kin  
Clave to him, and abode in his own  
land.  
And many more when Modred raised  
revolt,  
Forgetful of their troth and fealty,  
clave  
To Modred, and a remnant stays with  
me.<sup>440</sup>  
And of this remnant will I leave a  
part,  
True men who love me still, for whom  
I live,  
To guard thee in the wild hour com-  
ing on,  
Lest but a hair of this low head be  
harm'd.



Fear not ; thou shalt be guarded till  
     my death.  
 Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies  
 Have err'd not, that I march to meet  
     my doom.  
 Thou hast not made my life so sweet  
     to me,  
 That I the King should greatly care to  
     live ;  
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose of  
     my life. <sup>450</sup>  
 Bear with me for the last time while  
     I show,  
 Even for thy sake, the sin which thou  
     hast sinn'd.  
 For when the Roman left us, and  
     their law  
 Relax'd its hold upon us, and the  
     ways  
 Wère fill'd with rapine, here and  
     there a deed  
 Of prowess done redress'd a random  
     wrong.  
 But I was first of all the kings who  
     drew  
 The knighthood-errant of this realm  
     and all  
 The realms together under me, their  
     Head,  
 In that fair Order of my Table Round,  
 A glorious company, the flower of  
     men, <sup>461</sup>  
 To serve as model for the mighty  
     world,  
 And be the fair beginning of a time.  
 I made them lay their hands in mine  
     and swear  
 To reverence the King, as if he were  
 Their conscience, and their conscience  
     as their King,  
 To break the heathen and uphold the  
     Christ,  
 To ride abroad redressing human  
     wrongs,  
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to  
     it, <sup>469</sup>  
 To honor his own word as if his God's,  
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
 And worship her by years of noble  
     deeds,  
 Until they won her ; for indeed I  
     knew  
 Of no more subtle master under hea-  
     ven  
 Than is the maiden passion for a maid,

Not only to keep down the base in  
     man,  
 But teach high thought, and amiable  
     words  
 And courtliness, and the desire of  
     fame,  
 And love of truth, and all that makes  
     a man. <sup>480</sup>  
 And all this throve before I wedded  
     thee,  
 Believing, " Lo, mine helpmate, one  
     to feel  
 My purpose and rejoicing in my  
     joy ! "  
 Then came thy shameful sin with  
 Lancelot ;  
 Then came the sin of Tristram and  
 Isolt ;  
 Then others, following these my  
     mightiest knights,  
 And drawing foul ensample from fai  
     names,  
 Sinn'd also, till the loathsome oppo-  
     site  
 Of all my heart had destined did ob-  
     tain,  
 And all thro' thee ! so that this life of  
     mine <sup>490</sup>  
 I guard as God's high gift from scathe  
     and wrong,  
 Not greatly care to lose ; but rather  
     think  
 How sad it were for Arthur, should  
     he live,  
 To sit once more within his lonely  
     hall,  
 And miss the wonted number of my  
     knights,  
 And miss to hear high talk of noble  
     deeds  
 As in the golden days before thy sin.  
 For which of us who might be left  
     could speak  
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance  
     at thee ?  
 And in thy bowers of Camelot or of  
     Usk <sup>500</sup>  
 Thy shadow still would glide from  
     room to room,  
 And I should evermore be vex't with  
     thee  
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the  
     stair.  
 For think not, tho' thou wouldst not  
     love thy lord,



'He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch  
Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet'

Thy lord has wholly lost his love for  
thee.  
I am not made of so slight elements.  
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy  
shame.  
I hold that man the worst of public  
foes  
Who either for his own or children's  
sake,  
To save his blood from scandal, lets  
the wife

Whom he knows false abide and rule  
the house:  
For being thro' his cowardice allow'd  
Her station, taken everywhere for-  
pure,  
She like a new disease, unknown to  
men,  
Creeps, no precaution used, among  
the crowd,  
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes,  
and saps

The fealty of our friends, and stirs the  
pulse  
With devil's leaps, and poisons half  
the young.  
Worst of the worst were that man he  
that reigns !  
Better the King's waste hearth and  
aching heart  
Than thou reseated in thy place of  
light,  
The mockery of my people and their  
bane !'

He paused, and in the pause she  
crept an inch  
Nearer, and laid her hands about his  
feet.  
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.  
Then waiting by the doors the war-  
horse neigh'd  
As at a friend's voice, and he spake  
again :

'Yet think not that I come to urge  
thy crimes ;  
I did not come to curse thee, Guine-  
vere,  
I, whose vast pity almost makes me  
die  
To see thee, laying there thy golden  
head,  
My pride in happier summers, at my  
feet.  
The wrath which forced my thoughts  
on that fierce law,  
The doom of treason and the flaming  
death, —  
When first I learnt thee hidden here,  
— is past.  
The pang — which, while I weigh'd  
thy heart with one  
Too wholly true to dream untruth in  
thee,  
Made my tears burn — is also past —  
in part.  
And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and  
I,  
Lo, I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
Forgives ! do thou for thine own soul  
the rest.  
But how to take last leave of all I  
loved ?  
O golden hair, with which I used to  
play  
Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded  
form,

And beauty such as never woman  
wore,  
Until it came a kingdom's curse with  
thee —  
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not  
mine,  
But Lancelot's ; nay, they never were  
the King's.  
I cannot take thy hand ; that too is  
flesh,  
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and  
mine own flesh,  
Here looking down on thine polluted,  
cries,  
"I loathe thee ;" yet not less, O  
Guinevere,  
For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into  
my life  
So far that my doom is, I love thee still.  
Let no man dream but that I love thee  
still.  
Perchance, and so thou purify thy  
soul,  
And so thou lean on our fair father  
Christ,  
Hereafter in that world where all are  
pure  
We two may meet before high God,  
and thou  
Wilt spring to me, and claim me  
thine, and know  
I am thine husband — not a smaller  
soul,  
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me  
that,  
I charge thee, my last hope. Now must  
I hence.  
Thro' the thick night I hear the trum-  
pet blow.  
They summon me their King to lead  
mine hosts  
Far down to that great battle in the  
west,  
Where I must strike against the man  
they call  
My sister's son — no kin of mine, who  
leagues  
With Lords of the White Horse, hea-  
then, and knights,  
Traitors — and strike him dead, and  
meet myself  
Death, or I know not what mysterious  
doom.  
And thou remaining here wilt learn  
the event ;

But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side, see thee no  
more —  
Farewell !'

And while she grovell'd at his feet,  
She felt the King's breath wander o'er  
her neck,  
And in the darkness o'er her fallen  
head  
Perceived the waving of his hands  
that blest. 580

Then, listening till those armed  
steps were gone,  
Rose the pale Queen, and in her an-  
guish found  
The casement : ' peradventure,' so she  
thought,  
' If I might see his face, and not be  
seen.'  
And lo, he sat on horseback at the  
door !  
And near him the sad nuns with each  
a light  
Stood, and he gave them charge about  
the Queen,  
To guard and foster her for evermore.  
And while he spake to these his helm  
was lower'd,  
To which for crest the golden dragon  
clung 590  
Of Britain ; so she did not see the face,  
Which then was as an angel's, but she  
saw,  
Wet with the mists and smitten by the  
lights,  
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-  
ship  
Blaze, making all the night a steam of  
fire.  
And even then he turn'd ; and more  
and more  
The moony vapor rolling round the  
King,  
Who seem'd the phantom of a giant  
in it,  
Enwound him fold by fold, and made  
him gray  
And grayer, till himself became as  
mist 600  
Before her, moving ghostlike to his  
doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and  
cried aloud,

' O Arthur !' there her voice brake  
suddenly,  
Then — as a stream that spouting from  
a cliff  
Falls in mid air, but gathering at the  
base  
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the  
vale —  
Went on in passionate utterance :

' Gone — my lord !  
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be  
slain !  
And he forgave me, and I could not  
speak.  
Farewell ? I should have answer'd  
his farewell. 610  
His mercy choked me. Gone, my  
lord the King,  
My own true lord ! how dare I call  
him mine ?  
The shadow of another cleaves to me,  
And makes me one pollution. He,  
the King,  
Call'd me polluted. Shall I kill my-  
self ?  
What help in that ? I cannot kill my  
sin,  
If soul be soul, nor can I kill my  
shame ;  
No, nor by living can I live it down.  
The days will grow to weeks, the  
weeks to months,  
The months will add themselves and  
make the years, 620  
The years will roll into the centuries,  
And mine will ever be a name of  
scorn.  
I must not dwell on that defeat of  
fame.  
Let the world be ; that is but of the  
world —  
What else ? what hope ? I think there  
was a hope,  
Except he mock'd me when he spake  
of hope ;  
His hope he call'd it ; but he never  
mocks,  
For mockery is the fume of little  
hearts.  
And blessed be the King, who hath  
forgiven  
My wickedness to him, and left me  
hope 630  
That in mine own heart I can live  
down sin .

And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
 Before high God! Ah great and gentle lord,  
 Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint  
 Among his warring senses, to thy knights —  
 To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took  
 Full easily all impressions from below,  
 Would not look up, or half-despised the height  
 To which I would not or I could not climb —  
 I thought I could not breathe in that fine air, <sup>640</sup>  
 That pure severity of perfect light —  
 I yearn'd for warmth and color which I found  
 In Lancelot — now I see thee what thou art,  
 Thou art the highest and most human too,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none  
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?  
 Now — ere he goes to the great battle? none!  
 Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
 But now it were too daring. Ah my God,  
 What might I not have made of thy fair world, <sup>650</sup>  
 Had I but loved thy highest creature here?  
 It was my duty to have loved the highest;  
 It surely was my profit had I known;  
 It would have been my pleasure had I seen.  
 We needs must love the highest when we see it,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand  
 Grasp'd made her veil her eyes. She look'd and saw  
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,  
 'Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?'  
 Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns  
 All round her, weeping; and her heart was loosed <sup>661</sup>

Within her, and she wept with these and said:

'Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke  
 The vast design and purpose of the King.  
 O, shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,  
 Meek maidens, from the voices crying, "Shame!"  
 I must not scorn myself; he loves me still.  
 Let no one dream but that he loves me still.  
 So let me, if you do not shudder at me,  
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you; <sup>670</sup>  
 Wear black and white, and be a nun like you,  
 Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts;  
 Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,  
 But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;  
 Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your shrines;  
 Do each low office of your holy house;  
 Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole  
 To poor sick people, richer in His eyes  
 Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I;  
 And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own; <sup>680</sup>  
 And so wear out in alms-deed and in prayer  
 The sombre close of that voluptuous day  
 Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King.'

She said. They took her to themselves; and she  
 Still hoping, fearing 'Is it yet too late?'  
 Dwelt with them, till in time their abbess died.  
 Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,  
 And for the power of ministration in her,  
 And likewise for the high rank she had borne,

Was chosen abbess, there, an abbess,  
lived <sup>690</sup>  
For three brief years, and there, an  
abbess, past  
To where beyond these voices there  
is peace.

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere,  
First made and latest left of all the  
knights,  
Told, when the man was no more than  
a voice  
In the white winter of his age, to those  
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other  
minds.

For on their march to westward,  
Bedivere,  
Who slowly paced among the slum-  
bering host,  
Heard in his tent the moanings of the  
King:

'I found Him in the shining of the  
stars,  
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His  
fields, <sup>10</sup>  
But in His ways with men I find Him  
not.  
I waged His wars, and now I pass and  
die.  
O me! for why is all around us here  
As if some lesser god had made the  
world,  
But had not force to shape it as he  
would,  
Till the High God behold it from be-  
yond,  
And enter it, and make it beautiful?  
Or else as if the world were wholly  
fair,  
But that these eyes of men are dense  
and dim,  
And have not power to see it as it is—  
Perchance, because we see not to the  
close; — <sup>21</sup>  
For I, being simple, thought to work  
His will,  
And have but stricken with the sword  
in vain,  
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and  
friend

Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm  
Reels back into the beast, and is no  
more.

My God, thou hast forgotten me in  
my death!

Nay—God my Christ—I pass but  
shall not die.'

Then, ere that last weird battle in  
the west,

There came on Arthur sleeping, Ga-  
wain kill'd <sup>30</sup>

In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain  
blown

Along a wandering wind, and past his  
ear

Went shrilling: 'Hollow, hollow all  
delight!

Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass  
away.

Farewell! there is an isle of rest for  
thee.

And I am blown along a wandering  
wind,

And hollow, hollow, hollow all de-  
light!'

And fainter onward, like wild birds  
that change

Their season in the night and wail  
their way

From cloud to cloud, down the long  
wind the dream <sup>40</sup>

Shrill'd; but in going mingled with  
dim cries

Far in the moonlit haze among the  
hills,

As of some lonely city sack'd by night,  
When all is lost, and wife and child

with wail  
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke  
and call'd:

'Whospake? A dream. O, light upon  
the wind,

Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are  
these dim cries

Thine? or doth all that haunts the  
waste and wild

Mourn, knowing it will go along with  
me?'

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere  
and spake: <sup>50</sup>

'O me, my King, let pass whatever  
will,

Elves, and the harmless glamour of  
the field;

But in their stead thy name and glory  
 cling  
 To all high places like a golden cloud  
 For ever; but as yet thou shalt not  
 pass.  
 Light was Gawain in life, and light in  
 death  
 Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the  
 man;  
 And care not thou for dreams from  
 him, but rise—  
 I hear the steps of Modred in the west,  
 And with him many of thy people,  
 and knights 60  
 Once thine, whom thou hast loved,  
 but grosser grown  
 Than heathen, spitting at their vows  
 and thee.  
 Right well in heart they know thee  
 for the King.  
 Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.'

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
 Bedivere:  
 'Far other is this battle in the west  
 Whereto we move than when we  
 strove in youth,  
 And brake the petty kings, and fought  
 with Rome,  
 Or thrust the heathen from the Roman  
 wall,  
 And shook him thro' the north. Ill  
 doom is mine 70  
 To war against my people and my  
 knights.  
 The king who fights his people fights  
 himself.  
 And they my knights, who loved me  
 once, the stroke  
 That strikes them dead is as my death  
 to me.  
 Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way  
 Thro' this blind haze which, ever since  
 I saw  
 One lying in the dust at Almesbury,  
 Hath folded in the passes of the  
 world.'

Then rose the King and moved his  
 host by night,  
 And ever push'd Sir Modred, league  
 by league, 80  
 Back to the sunset bound of Lyon-  
 nesse—  
 A land of old upheaven from the abyss  
 By fire, to sink into the abyss again;

Where fragments of forgotten peoples  
 dwelt,  
 And the long mountains ended in a  
 coast  
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away  
 The phantom circle of a moaning  
 sea.  
 There the pursuer could pursue no  
 more,  
 And he that fled no further fly the  
 King;  
 And there, that day when the great  
 light of heaven 90  
 Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,  
 On the waste sand by the waste sea  
 they closed.  
 Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a  
 fight  
 Like this last, dim, weird battle of the  
 west.  
 A death-white mist slept over sand  
 and sea,  
 Whereof the chill, to him who breathed  
 it, drew  
 Down with his blood, till all his heart  
 was cold  
 With formless fear; and even on  
 Arthur fell  
 Confusion, since he saw not whom he  
 fought.  
 For friend and foe were shadows in  
 the mist, 100  
 And friend slew friend not knowing  
 whom he slew;  
 And some had visions out of golden  
 youth,  
 And some beheld the faces of old  
 ghosts  
 Look in upon the battle; and in the  
 mist  
 Was many a noble deed, many a base,  
 And chance and craft and strength in  
 single fights,  
 And ever and anon with host to host  
 Shocks, and the splintering spear, the  
 hard mail hewn,  
 Shield-breakings, and the clash of  
 brands, the crash  
 Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and  
 shrieks 110  
 After the Christ, of those who falling  
 down  
 Look'd up for heaven, and only saw  
 the mist;  
 And shouts of heathen and the traitor  
 knights,

Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous  
 blasphemies,  
 Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring  
 of the lungs  
 In that close mist, and cryings for the  
 light,  
 Moans of the dying, and voices of the  
 dead.

Last, as by some one death-bed  
 after wail  
 Of suffering, silence follows, or thro'  
 death  
 Or death-like swoon, thus over all  
 that shore, <sup>120</sup>  
 Save for some whisper of the seething  
 seas,  
 A dead hush fell; but when the dolor-  
 ous day  
 Grew drearier toward twilight falling,  
 came  
 A bitter wind, clear from the north,  
 and blew  
 The mist aside, and with that wind  
 the tide  
 Rose, and the pale King glanced  
 across the field  
 Of battle. But no man was moving  
 there;  
 Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,  
 Nor yet of heathen; only the wan  
 wave  
 Brake in among dead faces, to and fro  
 Swaying the helpless hands, and up  
 and down <sup>131</sup>  
 Tumbling the hollow helmets of the  
 fallen,  
 And shiver'd brands that once had  
 fought with Rome,  
 And rolling far along the gloomy  
 shores  
 The voice of days of old and days to  
 be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
 Bedivere,  
 And whiter than the mist that all day  
 long  
 Had held the field of battle was the  
 King:

'Hearest thou this great voice that  
 shakes the world,  
 And wastes the narrow realm whereon  
 we move, <sup>140</sup>  
 And beats upon the faces of the dead,

My dead, as tho' they had not died  
 for me?—  
 O Bedivere, for on my heart hath  
 fallen  
 Confusion, till I know not what I  
 am,  
 Nor whence I am, nor whether I be  
 king;  
 Behold, I seem but king among the  
 dead.'

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 'My King!  
 King everywhere! and so the dead  
 have kings,  
 There also will I worship thee as king.  
 Yet still thy life is whole, and still I  
 live <sup>150</sup>  
 Who love thee; but who hates thee,  
 he that brought  
 The heathen back among us, yonder  
 stands,  
 Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine  
 house.'

Then spake the King: 'My house  
 hath been my doom.  
 But call not thou this traitor of my  
 house  
 Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof  
 with me.  
 My house are rather they who swear  
 my vows,  
 Yea, even while they brake them,  
 own'd me king.  
 And well for thee, saying in my dark  
 hour,  
 When all the purport of my throne  
 hath fail'd, <sup>160</sup>  
 That quick or dead thou holdest me  
 for king.  
 King am I, whatsoever be their cry;  
 And one last act of kinghood shalt  
 thou see  
 Yet, ere I pass.' And uttering this  
 the King  
 Made at the man. Then Modred smote  
 his liege  
 Hard on that helm which many a  
 heathen sword  
 Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one  
 blow,  
 Striking the last stroke with Excali-  
 bur,  
 Slew him, and, all but slain himself,  
 he fell.



So all day long the noise of battle  
 roll'd <sup>170</sup>  
 Among the mountains by the winter  
 sea,  
 Until King Arthur's Table, man by  
 man,  
 Had fallen in Lyonesse about their  
 lord,  
 King Arthur; then, because his wound  
 was deep,  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the  
 field,  
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
 That stood on a dark strait of barren  
 land.  
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on  
 one  
 Lay a great water, and the moon was  
 full. <sup>180</sup>

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
 Bedivere:  
 'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
 The goodliest fellowship of famous  
 knights  
 Whereof this world holds record. Such  
 a sleep  
 They sleep—the men I loved. I  
 think that we  
 Shall never more, at any future time,  
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
 deeds,  
 Walking about the gardens and the  
 halls  
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
 I perish by this people which I made,—  
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
 again <sup>191</sup>  
 To rule once more—but let what will  
 be be,  
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
 That without help I cannot last till  
 morn.  
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
 Which was my pride; for thou rememberest how  
 In those old days, one summer noon,  
 an arm  
 Rose up from out the bosom of the  
 lake,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
 Holding the sword—and how I row'd  
 across <sup>200</sup>

And took it, and have worn it, like a  
 king;  
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
 In aftertime, this also shall be known.  
 But now delay not; take Excalibur,  
 And fling him far into the middle  
 mere;  
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly  
 bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee  
 thus,  
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the  
 helm—  
 A little thing may harm a wounded  
 man; <sup>210</sup>  
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring  
 thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine  
 he stept,  
 And in the moon athwart the place of  
 tombs,  
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
 Old knights, and over them the sea-  
 wind sang  
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
 stepping down  
 By zigzag paths and juts of pointed  
 rock,  
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur, <sup>220</sup>  
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter  
 moon,  
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
 ran forth  
 And sparkled keen with frost against  
 the hilt;  
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
 Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so  
 long  
 That both his eyes were dazzled as he  
 stood,  
 This way and that dividing the swift  
 mind,  
 In act to throw; but at the last it  
 seem'd  
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd <sup>230</sup>

There in the many-knotted water-flags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the  
marge.

So strode he back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
Bedivere:

'Hast thou perform'd my mission  
which I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what  
hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere:

'I heard the ripple washing in the  
reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the  
crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint  
and pale:

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and  
thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;  
For surer sign had follow'd, either  
hand,

Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to  
lie.

Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go  
again,

As thou art lief and dear, and do the  
thing

I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring  
me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second  
time

Across the ridge, and paced beside the  
mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fixt in  
thought;

But when he saw the wonder of the  
hilt,

How curiously and strangely chased,  
he smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand  
away,

Surely a precious thing, one worthy  
note,

Should thus be lost for ever from the  
earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes of  
many men.

What good should follow this, if this  
were done?

What harm, undone? Deep harm to  
disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king  
demand

An act unprofitable, against himself?

The King is sick, and knows not what  
he does.

What record or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty  
breath

And rumors of a doubt? But were  
this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of  
mighty kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of  
arms,

Saying: "King Arthur's sword, Ex-  
calibur,

Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the  
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in  
the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."

So might some old man speak in the  
aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honor and much fame  
were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the  
wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing  
heavily:

'What is it thou hast seen? or what  
hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere:

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the  
reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur,  
much in wrath:

'Ah miserable, and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is  
me!

Authority forgets a dying king,  
 Laid widow'd of the power in his  
     eye <sup>290</sup>  
 That bow'd the will. I see thee what  
 thou art,  
 For thou, the latest-left of all my  
 knights,  
 In whom should meet the offices of all,  
 Thou wouldst betray me for the pre-  
 cious hilt;  
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the  
     eyes.  
 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
 And the third time may prosper, get  
     thee hence;  
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
 I will arise and slay thee with my  
     hands.' <sup>300</sup>

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and  
     ran,  
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
     plunged  
 Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd  
     the sword,  
 And strongly wheel'd and threw it.  
     The great brand  
 Made lightnings in the splendor of the  
     moon,  
 And flashing round and round, and  
     whirl'd in an arch,  
 Shot like a streamer of the northern  
     morn,  
 Seen where the moving isles of win-  
     ter shock  
 By night, with noises of the Northern  
     Sea.  
 So flash'd and fell the brand Excali-  
     bur; <sup>310</sup>  
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an  
     arm  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
     derful,  
 And caught him by the hilt, and bran-  
     dish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in  
     the mere.  
 And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing  
     thicker breath:  
 'Now see I by thine eyes that this is  
     done.  
 Speak out; what is it thou hast heard,  
     or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
     vere:  
 'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest  
     the gems <sup>320</sup>  
 Should blind my purpose, for I never  
     saw,  
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I  
     die,  
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal  
     men,  
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
 Then with both hands I flung him,  
     wheeling him;  
 But when I look'd again, behold an  
     arm,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
     derful,  
 That caught him by the hilt, and bran-  
     dish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in  
     the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur,  
     breathing hard: <sup>330</sup>  
 'My end draws nigh; 't is time that  
     I were gone.  
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive  
     my weight,  
 And bear me to the margin; yet I  
     fear  
 My wound hath taken cold, and I  
     shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he  
     half rose,  
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his  
     arm,  
 And looking wistfully with wide blue  
     eyes  
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
 Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
 And would have spoken, but he found  
     not words; <sup>340</sup>  
 Then took with care, and kneeling on  
     one knee,  
 O'er both his shoulders drew the lan-  
     guid hands,  
 And rising bore him thro' the place of  
     tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur  
     panted hard,  
 Like one that feels a nightmare on his  
     bed  
 When all the house is mute. So sigh'd  
     the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear,  
 'Quick, quick!  
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'  
 But the other swiftly strode from ridge  
 to ridge,  
 Clothed with his breath, and looking,  
 as he walk'd, <sup>350</sup>  
 Larger than human on the frozen  
 hills.  
 He heard the deep behind him, and a  
 cry  
 Before. His own thought drove him  
 like a goad.  
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy  
 caves  
 And barren chasms, and all to left and  
 right  
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him,  
 as he based  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that  
 rang  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed  
 heels —  
 And on a sudden, lo, the level lake,  
 And the long glories of the winter  
 moon! <sup>360</sup>

Then saw they how there hove a  
 dusky barge,  
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to  
 stern,  
 Beneath them; and descending they  
 were ware  
 That all the decks were dense with  
 stately forms,  
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a  
 dream — by these  
 Three queens with crowns of gold —  
 and from them rose  
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling  
 stars,  
 And, as it were one voice, an agony  
 Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills  
 All night in a waste land, where no  
 one comes, <sup>370</sup>  
 Or hath come, since the making of the  
 world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me  
 in the barge.'  
 So to the barge they came. There  
 those three queens  
 Put forth their hands, and took the  
 King, and wept.  
 But she that rose the tallest of them  
 all

And fairest laid his head upon her  
 lap,  
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
 chafed his hands,  
 And call'd him by his name, complain-  
 ing loud,  
 And dropping bitter tears against a  
 brow  
 Striped with dark blood; for all his  
 face was white <sup>380</sup>  
 And colorless, and like the wither'd  
 moon  
 Smote by the fresh beam of the spring-  
 ing east;  
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd  
 with drops  
 Of onset; and the light and lustrous  
 curls —  
 That made his forehead like a rising  
 sun  
 High from the dais-throne — were  
 parch'd with dust,  
 Or, clotted into points and hanging  
 loose,  
 Mixt with the knightly growth that  
 fringed his lips.  
 So like a shatter'd column lay the  
 King;  
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance  
 in rest, <sup>390</sup>  
 From spur to plume a star of tourna-  
 ment,  
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and  
 charged  
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedi-  
 vere:  
 'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I  
 go?  
 Where shall I hide my forehead and  
 my eyes?  
 For now I see the true old times are  
 dead,  
 When every morning brought a noble  
 chance,  
 And every chance brought out a noble  
 knight.  
 Such times have been not since the  
 light that led <sup>400</sup>  
 The holy Elders with the gift of  
 myrrh.  
 But now the whole Round Table is  
 dissolved  
 Which was an image of the mighty  
 world;

And I, the last, go forth companion-  
less,  
And the days darken round me, and  
the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other  
minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from  
the barge :  
'The old order changeth, yielding  
place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many  
ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt  
the world. 410  
Comfort thyself; what comfort is in  
me ?

I have lived my life, and that which I  
have done

May He within himself make pure !  
but thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face  
again,

Pray for my soul. More things are  
wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Where-  
fore, let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and  
day.

For what are men better than sheep  
or goats

That nourish a blind life within the  
brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands  
of prayer 420

Both for themselves and those who  
call them friend ?

For so the whole round earth is every  
way

Bound by gold chains about the feet  
of God.

But now farewell. I am going a long  
way

With these thou seest—if indeed I  
go—

For all my mind is clouded with a  
doubt—

To the island-valley of Avilion ;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any

snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it  
lies

Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with or-  
chard lawns 430

And bowery hollows crown'd with  
summer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous  
wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar  
and sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-  
breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes

the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir

Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the

hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge

of dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died

away. 440

But when that moan had past for  
evermore,

The stillness of the dead world's win-  
ter dawn

Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The  
King is gone.'

And therewithal came on him the  
weird rhyme,

'From the great deep to the great  
deep he goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly  
clomb

The last hard footstep of that iron  
crag,

Thence mark'd the black hull moving  
yet, and cried :

'He passes to be king among the dead,  
And after healing of his grievous

wound 450  
He comes again ; but — if he come no  
more —

O me, be yon dark queens in yon  
black boat,

Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three  
whereat we gazed

On that high day, when, clothed with  
living light,

They stood before his throne in silence,  
friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at  
his need ?'

Then from the dawn it seem'd there  
came, but faint

As from beyond the limit of the world,  
Like the last echo born of a great cry,

Sounds, as if some fair city were one  
voice<sup>460</sup>  
Around a king returning from his wars.

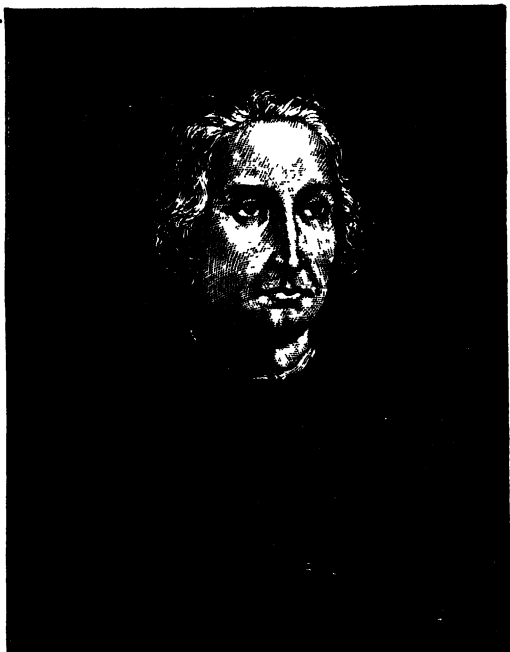
Thereat once more he moved about,  
and clomb  
Even to the highest he could climb,  
and saw,  
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of  
hand,  
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare  
the King,  
Down that long water opening on the  
deep  
Somewhere far off, pass on and on,  
and go  
From less to less and vanish into  
light.  
And the new sun rose bringing the  
new year.

## TO THE QUEEN

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,  
And loyal to thy land, as this to  
thee —  
Bear witness, that rememberable day,  
When, pale as yet and fever-worn, the  
Prince  
Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering  
life again  
From halfway down the shadow of  
the grave  
Past with thee thro' thy people and  
their love,  
And London roll'd one tide of joy thro'  
all  
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues  
of man  
And welcome! witness, too, the silent  
cry,<sup>10</sup>  
The prayer of many a race and creed,  
and clime —  
Thunderless lightnings striking un-  
der sea  
From sunset and sunrise of all thy  
realm,  
And that true North, whereof we  
lately heard  
A strain to shame us, 'Keep you to  
yourselves;  
So loyal is too costly! friends— your  
love  
Is but a burthen; loose the bond, and  
go.'

Is this the tone of empire? here the  
faith  
That made us rulers? this, indeed, her  
voice  
And meaning whom the roar of Hou-  
goumont<sup>20</sup>  
Left mightiest of all peoples under  
heaven?  
What shock has fool'd her since, that  
she should speak  
So feebly? wealthier — wealthier —  
hour by hour!  
The voice of Britain, or a sinking  
land,  
Some third-rate isle half-lost among  
her seas?  
*There* rang her voice, when the full  
city peal'd  
Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to  
their crown  
Are loyal to their own far sons, who  
love  
Our ocean-empire with her boundless  
homes  
For ever-broadening England, and  
her throne<sup>30</sup>  
In our vast Orient, and one isle, one  
isle,  
That knows not her own greatness; if  
she knows  
And dreads it we are fallen. — But  
thou, my Queen,  
Not for itself, but thro' thy living  
love  
For one to whom I made it o'er his  
grave  
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,  
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war  
with Soul,  
Ideal manhood closed in real man,  
Rather than that gray king whose  
name, a ghost,  
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped,  
from mountain peak,<sup>40</sup>  
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still;  
or him  
Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Mal-  
leor's, one  
Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a  
time  
That hover'd between war and wan-  
tonness,  
And crownings and dethronements.  
Take withal  
Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that  
Heaven

Will blow the tempest in the distance back	And that which knows, but careful for itself,
From thine and ours; for some are scared, who mark,	And that which knows not, ruling that which knows
Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,	To its own harm. The goal of this great world
Waverings of every vane with every wind,	Lies beyond sight; yet — if ours slowly- grown
And wordy trucklings to the transient <sup>50</sup> hour,	And crown'd Republic's crowning common sense,
And fierce or careless looseners of the faith,	That saved her many times, not fail — their fears
And Softness breeding scorn of simple life,	Are morning shadows huger than the shapes
Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,	That cast them, not those gloomier which forego
Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice,	The darkness of that battle in the west
Or Art with poisonous honey stolen from France,	Where all of high and holy dies away.



CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS (see p. 603)

## BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS

### TO ALFRED TENNYSON

#### MY GRANDSON

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is  
one with mine,  
Crazy with laughter and babble and  
earth's new wine,  
Now that the flower of a year and a  
half is thine,  
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of  
mine,  
Glorious poet who never hast written  
a line,  
Laugh, for the name at the head of  
my verse is thine.  
Mayst thou never be wrong'd by the  
name that is mine!

### THE FIRST QUARREL

#### (IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT)

I

'WAIT a little,' you say, 'you are sure  
it'll all come right,'  
But the boy was born i' trouble, an'  
looks so wan an' so white;  
Wait! an' once I ha' waited — I had n't  
to wait for long.  
Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry. —  
No, no, you are doing me  
wrong!  
Harry and I were married; the boy  
can hold up his head,  
The boy was born in wedlock, but  
after my man was dead;



I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an'  
I work an' I wait to the end.  
I am all alone in the world, an' you  
are my only friend.

## II

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you  
the tale o' my life.  
When Harry an' I were children, he  
call'd me his own little wife; <sup>10</sup>  
I was happy when I was with him,  
an' sorry when he was away,  
An' when we play'd together, I loved  
him better than play;  
He workt me the daisy chain—he  
made me the cowslip ball,  
He fought the boys that were rude,  
an' I loved him better than all.  
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at  
home in disgrace,  
I never could quarrel with Harry—I  
had but to look in his face.

## III

There was a farmer in Dorset of  
Harry's kin, that had need  
Of a good stout lad at his farm; he  
sent, an' the father agreed;  
So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire  
farm for years an' for years; <sup>19</sup>  
I walk'd with him down to the quay,  
poor lad, an' we parted in tears.  
The boat was beginning to move, we  
heard them a-ringing the bell,  
'I'll never love any but you, God bless  
you, my own little Nell.'

## IV

I was a child, an' he was a child, an'  
he came to harm;  
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt  
with him up at the farm,  
One had deceived her an' left her alone  
with her sin an' her shame,  
And so she was wicked with Harry;  
the girl was the most to blame.

## V

And years went over till I that was  
little had grown so tall  
The men would say of the maids, 'Our  
Nelly's the flower of 'em all.'  
I did n't take heed o' *them*, but I taught  
myself all I could  
To make a good wife for Harry, when  
Harry came home for good. <sup>20</sup>

## VI

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as  
happy too,  
For I heard it abroad in the fields, 'I'll  
never love any but you;'  
'I'll never love any but you,' the  
morning song of the lark;  
'I'll never love any but you,' the  
nightingale's hymn in the dark.

## VII

And Harry came home at last, but he  
look'd at me sidelong and shy,  
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so  
many years had gone by,  
I had grown so handsome and tall—  
that I might ha' forgot him  
somehow—  
For he thought—there were other  
lads—he was fear'd to look at  
me now.

## VIII

Hard was the frost in the field, we  
were married o' Christmas day,  
Married among the red berries, an' all  
as merry as May— <sup>40</sup>  
Those were the pleasant times, my  
house an' my man were my  
pride,  
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel  
a-sailing with wind an' tide.

## IX

But work was scant in the Isle, tho'  
he tried the villages round,  
So Harry went over the Solent to see  
if work could be found;  
An' he wrote: 'I ha' six weeks' work,  
little wife, so far as I know;  
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an'  
kiss you before I go.'

## X

So I set to righting the house, for  
was n't he coming that day?  
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was  
push'd in a corner away,  
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a  
letter along wi' the rest,  
I had better ha' put my naked hand  
in a hornets' nest. <sup>50</sup>

## XI

'Sweetheart,'—this was the letter—  
this was the letter I read—

'You promised to find me work near you, an' I wish I was dead —  
Did n't you kiss me an' promise? you  
have n't done it, my lad,  
An' I almost died o' your going away,  
an' I wish that I had.'

## XII

I too wish that I had — in the pleasant  
times that had past,  
Before I quarrell'd with Harry — *my*  
quarrel — the first an' the last.

## XIII

For Harry came in, an' I flung  
him the letter that drove me  
wild,

An' he told it me all at once, as simple  
as any child,

'What can it matter, my lass, what I  
did wi' my single life?

I ha' been as true to you as ever a  
man to his wife; 60

An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst.'  
'Then,' I said, 'I'm none o'  
the best.'

An' he smiled at me, 'Ain't you, my  
love? Come, come, little wife,  
let it rest!

The man isn't like the woman, no  
need to make such a stir.'

But he anger'd me all the more, an' I  
said, 'You were keeping with  
her,

When I was a-loving you all along  
an' the same as before.'

An' he didn't speak for a while,  
an' he anger'd me more and  
more.

Then he patted my hand in his gentle  
way, 'Let bygones be!'

'Bygones! you kept yours hush'd,' I  
said, 'when you married me!

By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she*  
— in her shame an' her sin —

You'll have her to nurse my child, if  
I die o' my lying in! 70

You'll make her its second mother!  
I hate her — an' I hate you!'

Ah, Harry, my man, you had better  
ha' beaten me black an' blue

Than ha' spoken as kind as you  
did, when I were so crazy wi'  
spite,

Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill  
all come right.'

## XIV

An' he took three turns in the rain,  
an' I watch'd him, an' when he  
came in

I felt that my heart was hard; he was  
all wet thro' to the skin,

An' I never said, 'off wi' the wet,' I  
never said, 'on wi' the dry,'

So I knew my heart was hard, when  
he came to bid me good-bye.

'You said that you hated me, Ellen,  
but that is n't true, you know;

I am going to leave you a bit — you'll  
kiss me before I go?' 80

## XV

'Going! you're going to her — kiss  
her — if you will,' I said —

I was near my time wi' the boy, I must  
ha' been light i' my head —

'I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!'  
— I didn't know well what I  
meant,

But I turn'd my face from *him*, an'  
he turn'd *his* face an' he went.

## XVI

And then he sent me a letter, 'I've  
gotten my work to do;

You would n't kiss me, my lass, an' I  
never loved any but you;

I am sorry for all the quarrel an'  
sorry for what she wrote,

I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go  
to-night by the boat.'

## XVII

An' the wind began to rise, an' I  
thought of him out at sea,

An' I felt I had been to blame; he  
was always kind to me. 90

'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it  
'ill all come right' —

An' the boat went down that night —  
the boat went down that night

## RIZPAH

## 17—

## I

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind  
over land and sea —

And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O  
mother, come out to me!'

Why should he call me to-night, when  
he knows that I cannot go?  
For the downs are as bright as day,  
and the full moon stares at the  
snow.

## II

We should be seen, my dear; they  
would spy us out of the town.  
The loud black nights for us, and the  
storm rushing over the down,  
When I cannot see my own hand, but  
am led by the creak of the chain,  
And grovel and grope for my son till  
I find myself drenched with the  
rain.

## III

Anything fallen again? nay—what  
was there left to fall?  
I have taken them home, I have num-  
ber'd the bones, I have hidden  
them all.  
What am I saying? and what are  
*you*? do you come as a spy?  
Falls? what falls? who knows? As  
the tree falls so must it lie.

## IV

Who let her in? how long has she been?  
you—what have you heard?  
Why did you sit so quiet? you never  
have spoken a word.  
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady  
—none of their spies—  
But the night has crept into my heart,  
and begun to darken my eyes.

## V

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what  
should *you* know of the night,  
The blast and the burning shame and  
the bitter frost and the fright?  
I have done it, while you were asleep  
—you were only made for the  
day.  
I have gather'd my baby together—  
and now you may go your way.

## VI

Nay—for it's kind of you, madam,  
to sit by an old dying wife.  
But say nothing hard of my boy, I  
have only an hour of life.  
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before  
he went out to die.

'They dared me to do it,' he said, and  
he never has told me a lie.  
I whipt him for robbing an orchard  
once when he was but a child—  
'The farmer dared me to do it,' he  
said; he was always so wild—  
And idle—and could n't be idle—my  
Willy—he never could rest.  
The King should have made him a  
soldier, he would have been  
one of his best.

## VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates,  
and they never would let him  
be good;  
They swore that he dare not rob the  
mail, and he swore that he  
would;  
And he took no life, but he took  
one purse, and when all was  
done  
He flung it among his fellows—'I'll  
none of it,' said my son.

## VIII

I came into court to the judge and the  
lawyers. I told them my tale,  
God's own truth—but they kill'd  
him, they kill'd him for rob-  
bing the mail.  
They hang'd him in chains for a show  
—we had always borne a good  
name—  
To be hang'd for a thief—and then  
put away—isn't that enough  
shame?  
Dust to dust—low down—let us  
hide! but they set him so high  
That all the ships of the world could  
stare at him, passing by.  
God'll pardon the hell-black raven  
and horrible fowls of the air,  
But not the black heart of the lawyer  
who kill'd him and hang'd him  
there.

## IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had  
bid him my last good-bye;  
They had fasten'd the door of his cell.  
'O mother!' I heard him cry.  
I could n't get back tho' I tried, he  
had something further to say.  
And now I never shall know it. The  
jailer forced me away.

## X

Then since I couldn't but hear that  
cry of my boy that was dead,  
They seized me and shut me up:  
they fasten'd me down on my  
bed.  
'Mother, O mother!' — he call'd in the  
dark to me year after year —  
They beat me for that, they beat me  
— you know that I couldn't  
but hear;  
And then at the last they found I had  
grown so stupid and still  
They let me abroad again — but the  
creatures had worked their will.

## XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone  
of my bone was left —  
I stole them all from the lawyers — and  
you, will you call it a theft? —  
My baby, the bones that had suck'd  
me, the bones that had laughed  
and had cried —  
'Theirs? O, no! they are mine — not  
theirs — they had moved in my  
side.

## XII

Do you think I was scared by the  
bones? I kiss'd 'em, I buried  
'em all —  
I can't dig deep, I am old — in the  
night by the churchyard wall.  
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the  
trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,  
But I charge you never to say that I  
laid him in holy ground.

## XIII

They would scratch him up — they  
would hang him again on the  
cursed tree.  
Sin? O, yes, we are sinners, I know  
— let all that be,  
And read me a Bible verse of the  
Lord's goodwill toward men —  
'Full of compassion and mercy, the  
Lord' — let me hear it again;  
'Full of compassion and mercy — long-  
suffering.' Yes, O, yes!  
For the lawyer is born but to murder  
— the Saviour lives but to bless.  
He'll never put on the black cap  
except for the worst of the  
worst,

And the first may be last — I have  
heard it in church — and the  
last may be first.

Suffering — O, long-suffering — yes,  
as the Lord must know,

Year after year in the mist and the  
wind and the shower and the  
snow.

## XIV

Heard, have you? what? they have  
told you he never repented his  
sin.

How do they know it? are *they* his  
mother? are *you* of his kin? 70

Heard! have you ever heard, when  
the storm on the downs began,  
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and  
the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

## XV

Election, Election, and Reprobation —  
it's all very well.

But I go to-night to my boy, and I  
shall not find him in hell.

For I cared so much for my boy that  
the Lord has look'd into my  
care,

And He means me I'm sure to be happy  
with Willy, I know not where.

## XVI

And if *he* be lost — but to save *my*  
soul, that is all your desire —

Do you think that I care for *my* soul  
if my boy be gone to the fire?

I have been with God in the dark — go,  
go, you may leave me alone —

You never have borne a child — you  
are just as hard as a stone. 80

## XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think  
that you mean to be kind,

But I cannot hear what you say for  
my Willy's voice in the wind —  
The snow and the sky so bright — he  
used but to call in the dark,

And he calls to me now from the  
church and not from the gibbet  
— for hark!

Nay — you can hear it yourself — it is  
coming — shaking the walls —

Willy — the moon's in a cloud —  
Good-night. I am going. He  
calls.

## THE NORTHERN COBBLER

## I

WAAIT till our Sally cooms in, fur  
thou mun a' sights<sup>1</sup> to tell.  
Eh, but I be maäin glad to seeä tha  
sa 'arty an' well.  
Cast awaay on a disolut land wi' a  
vartical soon<sup>2</sup>!  
Strange fur to goä fur to think what  
saäilors a' setan an' a' doon;  
'Summat to drink sa 'ot?' I 'a  
nowt but Adam's wine:  
What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side  
to the 'eät o' the line?

## II

'What's i' tha bottle a-stanning thee?'  
I'll tell tha. Gin.  
But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun  
goä fur it down to the inn.  
Naay — fur I be maäin-glad, but thaw  
tha was iver sa dry,  
Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle  
theer, an' I'll tell tha why. 10

## III

Meä an' thy sister was married, when  
wur it? back-end o' June,  
Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well  
as a fiddle i' tune.  
I could fettle and clump owd booöts  
and shoes wi' the best on 'em all,  
As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to  
Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.  
We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an'  
as 'appy as 'art could think,  
An' then the babby wur burn, and  
then I taäkes to the drink.

## IV

An' I weänt gaäinsally it, my lad, thaw  
I be hafe shaämed on it now,  
We could sing a good song at the  
Plow, we could sing a good  
song at the Plow;

<sup>1</sup> The vowels *ai*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *crälin*, *daäin*, *whaf*, *ai* (I), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

<sup>2</sup> The *oo* short, as in 'wood.'

Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd  
an' hurted my huck,<sup>1</sup>

An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes  
slaäpe down i' the squad an' the  
muck:

An' once I fowt wi' the taäilör — not  
hafe ov a man, my lad —

Fur he scrawm'd an' scratted my faäce  
like a cat, an' it maäde'er sa mad

That Sally she turn'd a tongue-  
banger,<sup>2</sup> an' raäted ma, 'Sottin'  
thy braäins

Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an'  
hawmin' about i' the laänes,

Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn not  
touch thy 'at to the Squire;

An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noäse  
an' I seeä'd 'im a-gittin' o' fire;

But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an'  
hallus as droonk as a king,

Foälsk' coostom flitted awaäy like a  
kite wi' a brokken string.

## V

An' Sally she wesh'd foälsk' cloäths  
to keep the wolf fro' the door,

Eh, but the moor she riled me, she  
druv me to drink the moor, 30

Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd,  
wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur  
'id,

An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde,  
and I weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

## VI

An' one night I cooms'oäim likę a bull  
gotten loose at a faäir,

An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an'  
cryin' and teärin' 'er aäir,

An' I tummled athurt the craädle an'  
sweär'd as I'd breäk ivry stick

O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied  
our Sally a kick,

An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs,  
an' she an' the babby beäl'd,<sup>4</sup>

Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did  
nor a mortal beäst o' the feäld.

## VII

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I  
seeä'd that our Sally went laämed

Cos' o' the kick as I gied'er, an' I wur  
dreädful ashaämed; 40

<sup>1</sup> Hip.

<sup>2</sup> Scold.

<sup>3</sup> Lounging.

<sup>4</sup> Bellowed, cried out.

An' Sally wur sloomy<sup>1</sup> an' draggletail'd in an owd turn gown,  
An' the babby's faäce wurn't wesh'd,  
an' the 'ole 'ouse hupside down.

## VIII

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty  
an' neät an' sweät,  
Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower  
fro' 'eäd to feeat:  
An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied  
'er by Thursby thurn;  
Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of  
a Sunday at murn,  
Could n't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-moun-  
tin' oop 'igher an' 'igher,  
An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e  
shined like a sparkle o' fire.  
' Does n't tha see 'im?' she axes, ' fur  
I can see 'im; ' an' I 49  
Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as  
danced in 'er pratty blue eye;  
An' I says, 'I mun gie tha a kiss,' an'  
Sally says, 'Noä, thou moänt,'  
But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother,  
an' Sally says, 'doänt!'

## IX

An' when we coom'd into meeätin', at  
fust she wur all in a tew,  
But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn to-  
gether like birds on a beugh;  
An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' hell-fire an'  
the loov o' God fur men,  
An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally  
gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

## X

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick  
like Saätan as fell  
Down out o' heaven i' hell-fire — thaw  
theer 's naw drinkin' i' hell;  
Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the  
wolf fro' the door,  
All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er  
as well as afoor. 60

## XI

Sa like a graät num-cumpus I blub-  
ber'd awaäy o' the bed —  
' Weänt niver do it naw moor; ' an'  
Sally loookt up an' she said,  
' I'll upowd it<sup>2</sup> tha weänt; thou 'rt  
like the rest o' the men.

<sup>1</sup> Sluggish, out of spirits.

<sup>2</sup> I'll uphold it.

Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till  
tha does it ageän.

Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I  
knaaws, as knaaws tha sa well,  
That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im  
tha 'll foller 'im slick into hell.'

## XII

' Naäy,' says I, ' fur I weänt goä sniff-  
fin' about the tap.'  
' Weänt tha?' she says, an' mysen I  
thowt i' mysen 'mayhap.'  
' Noä: ' an' I started awaäy like a shot,  
an' down to the hinn,  
An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin'  
theer, yon big black bottle o'  
gin. 70

## XIII

' That caps owt,'<sup>1</sup> says Sally, an' saw  
she begins to cry,  
But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says  
to 'er, 'Sally,' says I,  
' Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the  
Lord an' the power ov 'is graäce,  
Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll looök my hen-  
nemy straät i' the faäce,  
Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let  
ma looök at 'im then,  
' E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an'  
' e's the divil's oän sen.'

## XIV

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, could n't  
do naw work an' all,  
Nasty an' snaggy, an' shaäky, an'  
poonch'd my 'and wi' the hawl,  
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an'  
sattled 'ersen o' my knee,  
An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till ageän  
I feel'd mysen free. 80

## XV

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk  
stood a-gawmin' <sup>2</sup> in,  
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd  
istead of a quart o' gin;  
An' some on 'em said it wur watter —  
an' I wur chousin' the wife,  
Fur I could n't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur  
it nobbut to sääve my life;  
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick  
ov is airm, an' 'e shaws it to  
me,

<sup>1</sup> That's beyond everything.

<sup>2</sup> Staring vacantly.

'Feeal thou this! thou can't graw this  
 upo' watter!' says he.  
 An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just  
 as candles was lit,  
 'Thou moant do it,' he says, 'tha mun  
 breäk 'im off bit by bit.'  
 'Thou'rt but a Methody-man,' says  
 Parson, and laäys down 'is 'at,  
 An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, 'but  
 I respecks tha fur that;' 90  
 An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks  
 down fro' the 'All to see,  
 An' 'e spansk 'is 'and into mine, 'fur  
 I respecks tha,' says 'e;  
 An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a  
 wind fro' far an' wide,  
 And browt me the booöts to be cob-  
 bled fro' hafe the coontryside.

## XVI

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall  
 stan' to my dying daäy;  
 I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in anoother  
 kind of a waäy,  
 Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I  
 keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,  
 Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts  
 'im, an' puts 'im back i' the  
 light.

## XVII

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a  
 quart? Naw doubt;  
 But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi'  
 an' fowt it out. 100  
 Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I  
 cared to taäste,  
 But I moant, my lad, and I weänt, fur  
 I'd feäl mysen cleän dis-  
 graäced.

## XVIII

An' once I said to the Missis, 'My lass,  
 when I cooms to die,  
 Smash the bottle to smithers, the  
 devil's in 'im,' said I.  
 But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if  
 Sally be left aloän,  
 I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an'  
 taäke 'im afor the Throän.

## XIX

Coom thou 'eer — yon laädy a-steppin'  
 along the streeät,  
 Does n't tha knaw 'er — sa pratty, an'  
 feät, an' neät, an' sweäät?

Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe  
 ammost spic-span-new,  
 An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a  
 codlin wesh'd i' the dew. 110

## XX

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we  
 be a-goin to dine,  
 Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-pud-  
 din' <sup>1</sup> an' Adam's wine;  
 But if tha wants ony grog tha mun  
 goß fur it down to the Hinn,  
 Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is  
 blood, noß, not fur Sally's oän  
 kin.

## THE REVENGE

## A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

## I

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard  
 Grenville lay,  
 And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird,  
 came flying from far away:  
 'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have  
 sighted fifty-three!'  
 Then sware Lord Thomas Howard:  
 'Fore God I am no coward;  
 But I cannot meet them here, for my  
 ships are out of gear,  
 And the half my men are sick. I must  
 fly, but follow quick.  
 We are six ships of the line; can we  
 fight with fifty-three?'

## II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I  
 know you are no coward;  
 You fly them for a moment to fight  
 with them again.  
 But I've ninety men and more that  
 are lying sick ashore. 10  
 I should count myself the coward if I  
 left them, my Lord Howard,  
 To these Inquisition dogs and the  
 devildoms of Spain.'

## III

So Lord Howard past away with five  
 ships of war that day,  
 Till he melted like a cloud in the silent  
 summer heaven;

<sup>1</sup> A pudding made with the first milk of  
 the cow after calving.

But Sir Richard bore in hand all his  
sick men from the land  
Very carefully and slow,  
Men of Bideford in Devon,  
And we laid them on the ballast down  
below ;  
For we brought them all aboard,  
And they blest him in their pain, that  
they were not left to Spain, <sup>20</sup>  
To the thumb-screw and the stake, for  
the glory of the Lord.

## IV

He had only a hundred seamen to  
work the ship and to fight,  
And he sailed away from Flores till  
the Spaniard came in sight,  
With his huge sea-castles heaving  
upon the weather bow.  
' Shall we fight or shall we fly ?  
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,  
For to fight is but to die !  
There 'll be little of us left by the time  
this sun be set.'  
And Sir Richard said again : ' We be  
all good English men.  
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the  
children of the devil, <sup>30</sup>  
For I never turn'd my back upon Don  
or devil yet.'

## V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and  
we roar'd a hurrah, and so  
The little Revenge ran on sheer into  
the heart of the foe,  
With her hundred fighters on deck,  
and her ninety sick below ;  
For half of their fleet to the right and  
half to the left were seen,  
And the little Revenge ran on thro'  
the long sea-lane between.

## VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd  
down from their decks and  
laugh'd,  
Thousands of their seamen made mock  
at the mad little craft  
Running on and on, till delay'd  
By their mountain-like San Philip  
that, of fifteen hundred tons, <sup>40</sup>  
And up-shadowing high above us with  
her yawning tiers of guns,  
Took the breath from our sails, and  
we stay'd.

## VII

And while now the great San Philip  
hung above us like a cloud  
Whence the thunderbolt will fall  
Long and loud,  
Four galleons drew away  
From the Spanish fleet that day,  
And two upon the larboard and two  
upon the starboard lay,  
And the battle-thunder broke from  
them all.

## VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she  
bethought herself and went, <sup>50</sup>  
Having that within her womb that  
had left her ill content ;  
And the rest they came aboard us, and  
they fought us hand to hand,  
For a dozen times they came with  
their pikes and musqueteers,  
And a dozen times we shook 'em off  
as a dog that shakes his ears  
When he leaps from the water to the  
land.

## IX

And the sun went down, and the stars  
came out far over the summer  
sea,  
But never a moment ceased the fight  
of the one and the fifty-three.  
Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
their high-built galleons came,  
Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
with her battle-thunder and  
flame ;  
Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
drew back with her dead and  
her shame. <sup>60</sup>  
For some were sunk and many were  
shatter'd, and so could fight us  
no more —  
God of battles, was ever a battle like  
this in the world before ?

## X

For he said, ' Fight on ! fight on !'  
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck ;  
And it chanced that, when half of  
the short summer night was  
gone,  
With a grisly wound to be drest he  
had left the deck,  
But a bullet struck him that was  
dressing it suddenly dead,



And himself he was wounded again in  
the side and the head,  
And he said, 'Fight on! fight on!'

## XII

And the night went down, and the sun  
smiled out far over the summer  
sea,  
And the Spanish fleet with broken  
sides lay round us all in a ring;  
But they dared not touch us again, for  
they fear'd that we still could  
sting,  
So they watch'd what the end would  
be.

And we had not fought them in vain,  
But in perilous plight were we,  
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were  
slain,

And half of the rest of us maim'd for  
life

In the crash of the cannonades and the  
desperate strife;

And the sick men down in the hold  
were most of them stark and  
cold,

And the pikes were all broken or bent,  
and the powder was all of it  
spent;

And the masts and the rigging were  
lying over the side;

But Sir Richard cried in his English  
pride

'We have fought such a fight for a  
day and a night

As may never be fought again!

We have won great glory, my men!

And a day less or more

At sea or ashore,

We die—does it matter when?

Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—  
sink her, split her in twain!

Fall into the hands of God, not into  
the hands of Spain!

## XIII

And the gunner said, 'Ay, ay,' but  
the seamen made reply:

'We have children, we have wives,  
And the Lord hath spared our lives.

We will make the Spaniard promise,  
if we yield, to let us go;

We shall live to fight again and to  
strike another blow.'

And the lion there lay dying, and  
they yielded to the foe.

## XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their  
flagship bore him then,

Where they laid him by the mast, old  
Sir Richard caught at last,

And they praised him to his face with  
their courtly foreign grace;

But he rose upon their decks, and he  
cried:

'I have fought for Queen and Faith  
like a valiant man and true;

I have only done my duty as a man is  
bound to do.

With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard  
Grenville die!'

And he fell upon their decks, and he  
died.

## XIV

And they stared at the dead that had  
been so valiant and true,

And had holden the power and glory  
of Spain so cheap

That he dared her with one little ship  
and his English few;

Was he devil or man? He was devil  
for aught they knew,

But they sank his body with honor  
down into the deep,

And they mann'd the Revenge with a  
swarthier alien crew,

And away she sail'd with her loss and  
long'd for her own;

When a wind from the lands they had  
ruin'd awoke from sleep,

And the water began to heave and  
the weather to moan,

And or ever that evening ended a  
great gale blew,

And a wave like the wave that is  
raised by an earthquake grew,

Till it smote on their hulls and their  
sails and their masts and their  
flags,

And the whole sea plunged and fell on  
the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,

And the little Revenge herself went  
down by the island crags

To be lost evermore in the main.

## THE SISTERS

THEY have left the doors ajar; and  
by their clash,

And prelude on the keys, I know the  
song,

Their favorite — which I call 'The  
Tables Turn'd.'  
Evelyn begins it, 'O diviner Air.'

## EVELYN

O diviner Air,  
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust, the  
glare,  
Far from out the west in shadowing  
showers,  
Over all the meadow baked and bare,  
Making fresh and fair  
All the bowers and the flowers, 10  
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,  
Over all this weary world of ours,  
Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that — you scarce could  
better that!  
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

## EDITH

O diviner light,  
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with  
night,  
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding  
showers,  
Far from out a sky for ever bright, 19  
Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,  
Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,  
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,  
Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices — and  
themselves!  
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the  
other,  
As one is somewhat graver than the  
other —  
Edith than Evelyn. Your good uncle,  
whom  
You count the father of your fortune,  
longs  
For this alliance. Let me ask you then,  
Which voice most takes you? for I do  
not doubt, 30  
Being a watchful parent, you are taken  
With one or other; tho' sometimes I  
fear  
You may be flickering, fluttering in a  
doubt  
Between the two — which must not  
be — which might  
Be death to one. They both are beau-  
tiful;  
Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says  
The common voice, if one may trust  
it, she?

No! but the paler and the graver,  
Edith.

Woo her and gain her then; no waver-  
ing, boy!

The graver is perhaps the one for you  
Who jest and laugh so easily and so  
well. 41

For love will go by contrast, as by  
likes.

No sisters ever prized each other  
more.

Not so; their mother and her sister  
loved

More passionately still.

But that my best  
And oldest friend, your uncle, wishes  
it,

And that I know you worthy every  
way

To be my son, I might, perchance, be  
loath

To part them, or part from them; and  
yet one

Should marry, or all the broad lands  
in your view 50

From this bay-window — which our  
house has held

Three hundred years — will pass col-  
laterally.

My father with a child on either  
knee,

A hand upon the head of either child,  
Smoothing their locks, as golden as  
his own

Were silver, 'get them wedded' would  
he say.

And once my prattling Edith ask'd  
him 'why?'

'Ay, why?' said he, 'for why should  
I go lame?'

Then told them of his wars, and of  
his wound.

For see — this wine — the grape from  
whence it flow'd 60

Was blackening on the slopes of Por-  
tugal,

When that brave soldier, down the  
terrible ridge

Plunged in the last fierce charge at  
Waterloo,

And caught the laming bullet. He  
left me this,

Which yet retains a memory of its  
youth,

As I of mine, and my first passion.  
Come!  
Here's to your happy union with my  
child!

Yet must you change your name —  
no fault of mine!  
You say that you can do it as willingly  
As birds make ready for their bridal-  
time<sup>70</sup>  
By change of feather; for all that,  
my boy,  
Some birds are sick and sullen when  
they moult.  
An old and worthy name! but mine  
that stirr'd  
Among our civil wars and earlier too  
Among the Roses, the more venerable.  
I care not for a name — no fault of  
mine.  
Once more — a happier marriage than  
my own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on  
the plain.  
The highway running by it leaves a  
breadth  
Of sward to left and right, where,  
long ago,<sup>80</sup>  
One bright May morning in a world  
of song,  
I lay at leisure, watching overhead  
The aerial poplar wave, an amber  
spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landaulet  
Whirl'd by, which, after it had past  
me, show'd  
Turning my way, the loveliest face  
on earth.  
The face of one there sitting oppo-  
site,  
On whom I brought a strange unhap-  
piness,  
That time I did not see.

Love at first sight  
May seem — with goodly rhyme and  
reason for it —<sup>90</sup>  
Possible — at first glimpse, and for a  
face  
Gone in a moment — strange. Yet  
once, when first  
I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,  
A moonless night with storm — one  
lightning-fork

Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I lot-  
ter'd there  
The full day after, yet in retrospect  
That less than momentary thunder-  
sketch  
Of lake and mountain conquers all the  
day.

The sun himself has limn'd the face  
for me.  
Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as  
well.<sup>100</sup>  
For look you here — the shadows are  
too deep,  
And like the critic's blurring comment  
make  
The veriest beauties of the work ap-  
pear  
The darkest faults; the sweet eyes  
frown, the lips  
Seem but a gash. My sole memorial  
Of Edith — no, the other, — both in-  
deed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro'  
sense and soul  
And by the poplar vanish'd — to be  
found  
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the  
tall  
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping  
beechen boughs<sup>110</sup>  
Of our New Forest. I was there  
alone.  
The phantom of the whirling landaulet  
For ever past me by; when one quick  
peal  
Of laughter drew me thro' the glim-  
mering glades  
Down to the snowlike sparkle of a  
cloth  
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face  
again,  
My Rosalind in this Arden — Edith —  
all  
One bloom of youth, health, beauty,  
happiness,  
And moved to merriment at a passing  
jest.

There one of those about her know-  
ing me<sup>120</sup>  
Call'd me to join them; so with these  
I spent  
What seem'd my crowning hour, my  
day of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully.  
The worse for her, for me! Was I  
content?

Ay — no, not quite ; for now and then  
I thought

Laziness, vague love-longings, the  
bright May,

Had made a heated haze to magnify  
The charm of Edith — that a man's  
ideal

Is high in heaven, and lodged with  
Plato's God,

Not findable here — content, and not  
content, <sup>130</sup>

In some such fashion as a man may be  
That having had the portrait of his  
friend

Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and  
says,

' Good ! very like ! not altogether he.'

As yet I had not bound myself by  
words,

Only, believing I loved Edith, made  
Edith love *me*. Then came the day  
when I,

Flattering myself that all my doubts  
were fools

Born of the fool this Age that doubts  
of all —

Not I that day of Edith's love or  
mine — <sup>140</sup>

Had braced my purpose to declare  
myself.

I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.  
The golden gates would open at a  
word.

I spoke it — told her of my passion,  
seen

And lost and found again, had got so  
far,

Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell  
— I heard

Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the  
doors —

On a sudden after two Italian years  
Had set the blossom of her health  
again,

The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd —  
there, <sup>150</sup>

There was the face, and altogether she.  
The mother fell about the daughter's  
neck,

The sisters closed in one another's arms,  
Their people throng'd about them from  
the hall,

And in the thick of question and  
reply

I fled the house, driven by one angel  
face,

And all the Furies.

I was bound to her ;

I could not free myself in honor —  
bound

Not by the sounded letter of the word,  
But counter-pressures of the yielded  
hand <sup>160</sup>

That timorously and faintly echoed  
mine,

Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of  
her eyes

Upon me when she thought I did not  
see —

Were these not bonds ? nay, nay, but  
could I wed her

Loving the other ? do her that great  
wrong ?

Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-  
morn ?

Had I not known where Love, at first  
a fear,

Grew after marriage to full height and  
form ?

Yet after marriage, that mock-sister  
there —

Brother-in-law — the fiery nearness of  
it — <sup>170</sup>

Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood —  
What end but darkness could ensue  
from this

For all the three ? So Love and Honor  
jarr'd,

Tho' Love and Honor join'd to raise  
the full

High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up  
and down

Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote :

' My mother bids me ask ' — I did not  
tell you —

A widow with less guile than many a  
child.

God help the wrinkled children that  
are Christ's

As well as the plump cheek — she  
wrought us harm, <sup>180</sup>

Poor soul, not knowing ! — ' Are you  
ill ? ' — so ran

The letter — ' you have not been here  
of late.

You will not find me here. At last I  
 go  
 On that long-promised visit to the  
 North.  
 I told your wayside story to my mother  
 And Evelyn. She remembers you.  
 Farewell.  
 Pray come and see my mother. Almost  
 blind  
 With ever-growing cataract, yet she  
 thinks  
 She sees you when she hears. Again  
 farewell.'

Cold words from one I had hoped to  
 warm so far  
 That I could stamp my image on her  
 heart!  
 'Pray come and see my mother, and  
 farewell.'  
 Cold, but as welcome as free airs of  
 heaven  
 After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish,  
 strange!  
 What dwarfs are men! my strangled  
 vanity  
 Utter'd a stifled cry — to have vex't  
 myself  
 And all in vain for her — cold heart or  
 none —  
 No bride for me. Yet so my path was  
 clear  
 To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.  
 For Evelyn knew not of my former  
 suit,  
 Because the simple mother work'd  
 upon  
 By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of  
 it.  
 And Edith would be bridesmaid on  
 the day.  
 But on that day, not being all at  
 ease,  
 I from the altar glancing back upon  
 her,  
 Before the first 'I will' was utter'd,  
 saw  
 The bridesmaid pale, statue-like, pas-  
 sionless —  
 'No harm, no harm' — I turn'd again,  
 and placed  
 My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no  
 word,

210

She wept no tear, but round my Eve  
 lyn clung  
 In utter silence for so long, I thought,  
 'What, will she never set her sister  
 free?'

We left her, happy each in each,  
 and then,  
 As tho' the happiness of each in each  
 Were not enough, must fain have tor-  
 rents, lakes,  
 Hills, the great things of Nature and  
 the fair,  
 To lift us as it were from common-  
 place,  
 And help us to our joy. Better have  
 sent  
 Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth,  
 To change with her horizon, if true  
 Love  
 Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

221

Far off we went. My God, I would  
 not live  
 Save that I think this gross hard-  
 seeming world  
 Is our misshaping vision of the Powers  
 Behind the world, that make our griefs  
 our gains.

For on the dark night of our mar-  
 riage-day  
 The great tragedian, that had quench'd  
 herself  
 In that assumption of the bridesmaid  
 — she  
 That loved me — our true Edith — her  
 brain broke  
 With over-acting, till she rose and  
 fled  
 Beneath a pitiless rush of autumn rain  
 To the deaf church — to be let in — to  
 pray  
 Before that altar — so I think; and  
 there  
 They found her beating the hard Pro-  
 testant doors.  
 She died and she was buried ere we  
 knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak.  
 At once  
 The bright quick smile of Evelyn,  
 that had sunn'd  
 The morning of our marriage, past  
 away.

And on our home-return the daily  
 want<sup>240</sup>  
 Of Edith in the house, the garden,  
 still  
 Haunted us like her ghost; and by  
 and by,  
 Either from that necessity for talk  
 Which lives with blindness, or plain  
 innocence  
 Of nature, or desire that her lost  
 child  
 Should earn from both the praise of  
 heroism,  
 The mother broke her promise to the  
 dead,  
 And told the living daughter with  
 what love  
 Edith had welcomed my brief wooing  
 of her,

And all her sweet self-sacrifice and  
 death.<sup>250</sup>

Henceforth that mystic bond be-  
 twixt the twins —  
 Did I not tell you they were twins? —  
 prevail'd  
 So far that no caress could win my  
 wife  
 Back to that passionate answer of full  
 heart  
 I had from her at first. Not that her  
 love,  
 Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power  
 of love,  
 Had lessen'd, but the mother's garru-  
 lous wail  
 For ever woke the unhappy Past  
 again,



'We left her, happy each in each'

Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be  
my bride,  
Put forth cold hands between us, and  
I fear'd<sup>260</sup>  
The very fountains of her life were  
chill'd;  
So took her thence, and brought her  
here, and here  
She bore a child, whom reverently we  
call'd  
Edith; and in the second year was  
born

A second — this I named from her  
own self,  
Evelyn; then two weeks — no more  
— she join'd,  
In and beyond the grave, that one she  
loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,  
Thro' dreams by night and trances of  
the day,  
The sisters glide about me hand in  
hand,<sup>270</sup>  
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell  
One from the other, no, nor care to  
tell  
One from the other, only know they  
come,  
They smile upon me, till, remembering  
all  
The love they both have borne me,  
and the love  
I bore them both — divided as I am  
From either by the stillness of the  
grave —  
I know not which of these I love the  
best.

But *you* love Edith; and her own  
true eyes  
Are traitors to her; our quick Eve-  
lyn —<sup>280</sup>  
The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they  
talk,  
And not without good reason, my  
good son —  
Is yet untouch'd. And I that hold  
them both  
Dearest of all things — well, I am not  
sure —  
But if there lie a preference either  
way,  
And in the rich vocabulary of Love  
'Most dearest' be a true superlative —  
I think *I* likewise love your Edith  
most.

## THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL<sup>1</sup>

### I

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha, my lass, fur  
new Squire coom'd last night.  
Butter an' heggs — yis — yis. I'll go  
wi' tha back; all right;  
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I war-  
rants the heggs be as well,  
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya  
breaks the shell.

### II

Sit thysen down fur a bit; hev a glass  
o' cowslip wine!  
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as  
thaw they was gells o' mine,  
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire  
an' 'is darters an' me,  
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I  
niver not took to she.  
But Nelly, the last of the cletch,<sup>2</sup> I  
liked 'er the fust on 'em all,  
Fur hoffsens we talt o' my darter es  
died o' the fever at fall;<sup>10</sup>  
An' I thowt 't wur the will o' the Lord,  
but Miss Annie she said it wur  
draäins,  
Fur she hed n't naw coomfut in 'er,  
an' arn'd naw thanks fur 'er  
paäins.  
Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord, my chil-  
der, I han't gotten none!  
Sa new Squire 's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in  
'is 'and, an' owd Squire 's gone.

### III

Fur 'staätte be i' taäil, my lass — tha  
dosn' knaw what that be?  
But I knaws the law, I does, for the  
lawyer ha tow'd it to me.  
'When theer 's naw 'eä'd to a 'Ouse by  
the fault o' that ere maäle —  
The gells they counts fur nowt, and  
the next un he taäkes the taäil.'

### IV

What be the next un like? can tha  
tell ony harm on 'im, lass? —  
Naäy sit down — naw 'urry — sa  
cowd! — hev another glass!<sup>20</sup>  
Straänge an' cowd fur the time! we  
may happen a fall o' snaw —

<sup>1</sup> See note on pronunciation, p. 582.

<sup>2</sup> A brood of chickens.

Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm,  
but I likes to know.

An' I oäps es 'e beänt booöklarn'd; but  
'e dosn' not coom fro' the shere;  
We'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an'  
we haätes booöklarnin' ere.

## V

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an  
niver lookt arter the land —  
Whoäts or turmuts or taätes — 'e'd  
hallus a booök i' 'is 'and,  
Hallus aloän wi' 'is booöks, thaw nigh  
upo' seventy year.  
An' booöks, what's booöks? thou  
knavs thebbe neyther 'ere nor  
theer.

## VI

An' the gells, they hed n't naw taäils,  
an' the lawyer he tow'd it me  
That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he  
could n't cut down a tree! <sup>30</sup>  
'Drat the trees,' says I, to be sewer I  
haätes 'em, my lass,  
Fur we puts the muck o' the land, an'  
they sucks the muck fro' the  
grass.

## VII

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an'  
gied to the tramps goin' by —  
An' all o' the wust i' the parish — wi'  
hoffsens a drop in 'is eye.  
An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her  
awn ridin-erse to 'ersen,  
An' they rampaged about wi' their  
grooms, an' wus 'untin' arter  
the men,  
An' hallus a-dallackt<sup>1</sup> an' dizen'd out,  
an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,  
While 'e sit like a greät glimmer-  
gowk<sup>2</sup> wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is  
noäse,  
An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff as it  
could n't be scroob'd awaäy,  
Fur 'atween 'is readin' an' writin' 'e  
snifft up a box in a daäy, <sup>40</sup>  
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor  
arter the birds wi' 'is gun,  
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e  
leäved it to Charlie 'is son,  
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds,  
but Charlie 'e cotch'd the pike,

<sup>1</sup> Overdressed in gay colors.

<sup>2</sup> Owl.

Fur 'e warn't not burn to the land, an'  
'e did n't take kind to it like;

But I eärs es 'e'd gie fur a howry,<sup>1</sup>  
owd book thutty pound an'  
moor,

An' 'e'd wrote an' owd book, his awn  
sen, sa I knaw'd es 'e'd coom  
to be poor;

An' 'e gied — I be fear'd fur to tell tha  
'ow much — fur an owd scratted  
stoän,

An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land  
an' 'e got a brown pot an' a  
boän,

An' 'e bowt owd money, es would n't  
goä, wi' good gowd o' the  
Queen,

An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt  
an' which was a shaäme to be  
seen,

But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e  
niver not seed to owt, <sup>51</sup>

An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booöks,  
an' booöks, as thou knaws, beänt  
nowt.

## VIII

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she  
lived she kep' 'em all clear,

Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed  
none of 'er darters 'ere;

But arter she died we was all es one,  
the childer an' me,

An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an'  
offens we hed 'em to tea.

Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses  
'ud talk o' their Missis's waäys,

An' the Missis's talk'd o' the lasses. —  
I'll tell tha some o' these daäys.

Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck  
oop, like 'er mother afoor —

'Er an' 'er blessed darter — they niver  
derken'd my door. <sup>6c</sup>

## IX

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till  
'e'd gotten a fright at last,

An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's  
letters they follder'd sa fast;

But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an'  
'e says to 'im, meek as a mouse,

'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or  
the gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,

Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I  
'oäps es thou 'll elp me a bit,

<sup>1</sup> Filthy.



An' if thou 'll 'gree to cut off thy taail  
I may saäve mysen yit.'

## X

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e  
sweärs, an' 'e says to 'im, 'Noä.  
I've gotten the 'staäte by the taail an'  
be dang'd if I iver let goä!  
Coom! coom! feyther, 'e says, 'why  
should n't thy booöks be sowd!  
I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe  
worth their weight i' gowd.' 70

## XI

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' seed  
'em, belong'd to the Squire,  
But the lasses 'ed teärd out leäves i'  
the middle to kindle the fire;  
Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd  
nigh to nowt at the saäle,  
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to  
git 'im to cut off 'is taail.

## XII

Ya would n't find Charlie's likes—'e  
were that outdacious at 'oäim,  
Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out  
hell wi' a small-tooth coämb—  
Droönk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an'  
droonk wi' the farmer's säle,  
Mad wi' the lasses an' all—an' 'e  
would n't cut off the taail.

## XIII

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and  
a thurn be a-grawin' theer,  
I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the  
maäy es I seed it to-year— 80  
Theerbouts Charlie joompt—and it  
gled me a scare tother night,  
Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i'  
the derk, fur it looökt sa white.  
'Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp!— thaw  
the banks o' the beck be sa high,  
Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un,  
thaw niver a hair wur awry;  
But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'  
Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,  
Sa theer wur a hend o' the taail, fur  
'e lost 'is taail i' the beck.

## XIV

Sa 'is taail wur lost an' 'is booöks wur  
gone an' 'is boy wur deääd,  
An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but  
'e niver not lift oop 'is 'eääd.

Hallus a soft un, Squire! an' 'e smiled,  
fur 'e hed n't naw friend,  
Sa feyther an' son was buried together,  
an' this wur the hend. 90

## XV

An' Parson as hes n't the call, nor the  
mooney, but hes the pride,  
'E reäds of a sewer an' sartin 'oäp o'  
the tother side;  
But I beänt that sewer es the Lord, how-  
siver they praäy'd an' praäy'd,  
Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves  
their debts to be paäid.  
Siver the mow'ds rattled down upo'  
poor owd Squire i' the wood,  
An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur  
they weänt niver coom to naw  
good.

## XVI

Fur Molly the long un she walkt  
awaäy wi' a hoffer lad,  
An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin', sa o'  
coorse she be gone to the bad!  
An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet-  
'arts she niver 'ed none—  
Straänge an' unheppen<sup>1</sup> Miss Lucy!  
we naämed her 'Dot an' gaw  
one! 100  
An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics,  
wi'out ony harm i' the legs,  
An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'eääd  
as bald as one o' them heggs,  
An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as  
big i' the mouth as a cow,  
An' saw she mun hammergrate,<sup>2</sup> lass,  
or she weänt git a maäte ony-  
how!  
An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me  
afor my awn foälk to my  
faäce,  
'A hignorant village wife es 'ud hev  
to be larn'd her awn plaäce,  
Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes  
now be a-grawin' sa howd,  
I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt  
not fit to be towd!

## XVII

Sa I did n't not taäke it kindly ov owd  
Miss Annie to saäy  
Es I should be talkin' ageän 'em, es  
soon es they went awaäy, 110

<sup>1</sup> Ungainly, awkward.

<sup>2</sup> Emigrate.

Fur lawks! 'ow I cried when they  
went, an' our Nelly she gied  
me 'er 'and,  
Fur I 'd ha done owt for the Squire an'  
'is gells es belong'd to the land;  
Booöks, es I said afor, thebbe ney-  
ther 'ere nor theer!  
But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs  
for huppuds o' twenty year.

## XVIII

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd,  
sa I hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,  
An' they knaw'd what butter wur,  
an' they knaw'd what a hegg  
wur an' all;  
Hugger-mugger they lived, but they  
wasn't that eäsy to please,  
Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they  
laäid big heggs es tha seäts;  
An' I niver puts saäme<sup>1</sup> i' my butter  
— they does it at Willis's farm;  
Taäste another drop o' the wine —  
tweänt do tha naw harm. 120

## XIX

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in  
'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone;  
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter  
my night-cap wur on;  
Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur  
he coom'd last night sa laäte —  
Pluksh!!<sup>2</sup> the hens! the peäts! why  
did n't tha hesp the gaäte?

## IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

## EMMIE

## I

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I  
never had seen him before,  
But he sent a chill to my heart when  
I saw him come in at the door,  
Fresh from the surgery-schools of  
France and of other lands —  
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest,  
big merciless hands!  
Wonderful cures he had done, O, yes,  
but they said too of him  
He was happier using the knife than  
in trying to save the limb,

<sup>1</sup> Lard.<sup>2</sup> A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands to scare trespassing fowl.

And that I can well believe, for he  
look'd so coarse and so red,  
I could think he was one of those who  
would break their jests on the  
dead,  
And mangle the living dog that had  
loved him and fawn'd at his  
knee —  
Drench'd with the hellish oorali — that  
ever such things should be! 10

## II

Here was a boy — I am sure that some  
of our children would die  
But for the voice of love, and the  
smile, and the comforting eye —  
Here was a boy in the ward, every  
bone seem'd out of its place —  
Caught in a mill and crush'd — it was  
all but a hopeless case:  
And he handled him gently enough;  
but his voice and his face were  
not kind,  
And it was but a hopeless case, he had  
seen it and made up his mind,  
And he said to me roughly, 'The lad  
will need little more of your  
care.'  
'All the more need,' I told him, 'to  
seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;  
They are all His children here, and I  
pray for them all as my own.'  
But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good wo-  
man, can prayer set a broken  
bone?' 20  
Then he mutter'd half to himself, but  
I know that I heard him say,  
'All very well — but the good Lord  
Jesus has had his day.'

## III

Had? has it come? It has only  
dawn'd. It will come by and  
by.  
O, how could I serve in the wards if  
the hope of the world were a  
lie?  
How could I bear with the sights and  
the loathsome smells of disease  
But that He said, 'Ye do it to me,  
when ye do it to these?'

## IV

So he went. And we past to this  
ward where the younger chil-  
dren are laid.

Here is the cot of our orphan, our  
darling, our meek little maid ;  
Empty, you see, just now ! We have  
lost her who loved her so much—  
Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sen-  
sitive plant to the touch. <sup>30</sup>  
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often  
moved me to tears,  
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have  
found in a child of her years—  
Nay you remember our Emmie; you  
used to send her the flowers.  
How she would smile at 'em, play  
with 'em, talk to 'em hours after  
hours !  
They that can wander at will where the  
works of the Lord are reveal'd  
Little guess what joy can be got from  
a cowslip out of the field ;  
Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are  
all they can know of the spring,  
They freshen and sweeten the wards  
like the waft of an angel's wing.  
And she lay with a flower in one hand  
and her thin hands crost on her  
breast—  
Wan, but as pretty as heart can de-  
sire, and we thought her at rest,  
Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doc-  
tor said, 'Poor little dear, <sup>41</sup>  
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow ; she'll  
never live thro' it, I fear.'

## V

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as  
far as the head of the stair,  
Then I return'd to the ward ; the child  
didn't see I was there.

## VI

Never since I was nurse had I been so  
grieved and so vext !  
Emmie had heard him. Softly she  
call'd from her cot to the next,  
'He says I shall never live thro' it ;  
O Annie, what shall I do ?'  
Annie consider'd. 'If I,' said the  
wise little Annie, 'was you,  
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to  
help me, for, Emmie, you see,  
It's all in the picture there : "Little  
children should come to me"'—  
Meaning the print that you gave us, I  
find that it always can please <sup>51</sup>  
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with  
children about his knees.

'Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, 'but  
then if I call to the Lord,  
How should he know that it's me ?  
such a lot of beds in the ward !'  
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again  
she consider'd and said :  
'Emmie, you put out your arms, and  
you leave 'em outside on the  
bed—  
The Lord has so *much* to see to ! but,  
Emmie, you tell it him plain,  
It's the little girl with her arms lying  
out on the counterpane.'

## VII

I had sat three nights by the child—  
I could not watch her for four—  
My brain had begun to reel—I felt I  
could do it no more. <sup>60</sup>  
That was my sleeping-night, but I  
thought that it never would  
pass.  
There was a thunderclap once, and a  
clatter of hail on the glass,  
And there was a phantom cry that I  
heard as I tost about,  
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the  
storm and the darkness without ;  
My sleep was broken besides with  
dreams of the dreadful knife  
And fears for our delicate Emmie who  
scarce would escape with her  
life ;  
Then in the gray of the morning it  
seem'd she stood by me and  
smiled,  
And the doctor came at his hour, and  
we went to see to the child.

## VIII

He had brought his ghastly tools ; we  
believed her asleep again—  
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying  
out on the counterpane— <sup>70</sup>  
Say that His day is done ! Ah, why  
should we care what they say ?  
The Lord of the children had heard  
her, and Emmie had past away.

# DEDICATORY POEM TO THE PRINCESS ALICE

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that  
which lived  
True life live on—and if the fatal kiss,

Born of true life and love, divorce  
thee not  
From earthly love and life — if what  
we call  
The spirit flash not all at once from  
out  
This shadow into Substance — then  
perhaps  
The mellow'd murmur of the people's  
praise  
From thine own State, and all our  
breadth of realm,  
Where Love and Longing dress thy  
deeds in light,  
Ascends to thee; and this March  
morn that sees  
Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-  
bloom  
Break thro' the yews and cypress of  
thy grave,  
And thine Imperial mother smile  
again,  
May send one ray to thee! and who  
can tell —  
Thou — England's England - loving  
daughter — thou  
Dying so English thou wouldst have  
her flag  
Borne on thy coffin — where is he can  
swear  
But that some broken gleam from our  
poor earth  
May touch thee, while, remembering  
thee, I lay  
At thy pale feet this ballad of the  
deeds  
Of England, and her banner in the  
East?

## THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW

## I

BANNER of England, not for a sea-  
son, O banner of Britain, hast  
thou  
Floated in conquering battle or flapt  
to the battle-cry!  
Never with mightier glory than when  
we had rear'd thee on high  
Flying at top of the roofs in the  
ghastly siege of Lucknow —  
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but  
ever we raised thee anew,  
And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew.

## II

Frail were the works that defended  
the hold that we held with our  
lives —  
Women and children among us, God  
help them, our children and  
wives!  
Hold it we might — and for fifteen  
days or for twenty at most.  
'Never surrender, I charge you, but  
every man die at his post!' <sup>10</sup>  
Voice of the dead whom we loved,  
our Lawrence the best of the  
brave;  
Cold were his brows when we kiss'd  
him — we laid him that night in  
his grave.  
'Every man die at his post!' and  
there hail'd on our houses and  
halls  
Death from their rifle-bullets, and  
death from their cannon-balls,  
Death in our innermost chamber, and  
death at our slight barricade,  
Death while we stood with the mus-  
ket, and death while we stooped  
to the spade,  
Death to the dying, and wounds to  
the wounded, for often there  
fell,  
Striking the hospital wall, crashing  
thro' it, their shot and their  
shell,  
Death — for their spies were among  
us, their marksmen were told of  
our best,  
So that the brute bullet broke thro'  
the brain that could think for  
the rest; <sup>20</sup>  
Bullets would sing by our foreheads,  
and bullets would rain at our  
feet —  
Fire from ten thousand at once of the  
rebels that girdled us round —  
Death at the glimpse of a finger from  
over the breadth of a street,  
Death from the heights of the mosque  
and the palace, and death in the  
ground!  
Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine!  
down, down! and creep thro'  
the hole!  
Keep the revolver in hand! you can  
hear him — the murderous mole!  
Quiet, ah! quiet — wait till the point  
of the pickaxe be thro'!

Click with the pick, coming nearer  
and nearer again than before —  
Now let it speak, and you fire, and  
the dark pioneer is no more;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew ! 30

## III

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many  
times, and it chanced on a day  
Soon as the blast of that underground  
thunder-clap echo'd away,  
Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur  
like so many fiends in their  
hell —

Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on  
volley, and yell upon yell —  
Fiercely on all the defences our myriad  
enemy fell.

What have they done ? where is it ?  
Out yonder. Guard the Redan !  
Storm at the Water-gate ! storm at the  
Bailey-gate ! storm, and it ran  
Surging and swaying all round us, as  
ocean on every side

Plunges and heaves at a bank that is  
daily drown'd by the tide — 39

So many thousands that, if they be  
bold enough, who shall escape ?

Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall  
know we are soldiers and men !

Ready ! take aim at their leaders —  
their masses are gapp'd with  
our grape —

Backward they reel like the wave, like  
the wave flinging forward  
again,

Flying and foild at the last by the  
handful they could not subdue ;

And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew.

## IV

Handful of men as we were, we were  
English in heart and in limb,

Strong with the strength of the race to  
command, to obey, to endure,

Each of us fought as if hope for the  
garrison hung but on him ;

Still — could we watch at all points ?  
we were every day fewer and  
fewer.

There was a whisper among us, but  
only a whisper that past : 50

Children and wives — if the tigers  
leap into the fold unawares —

Every man die at his post — and the  
foe may outlive us at last —

Better to fall by the hands that they  
love, than to fall into theirs !'

Roar upon roar in a moment two mines  
by the enemy sprung

Clove into perilous chasms our walls  
and our poor palisades.

Rifleman, true is your heart, but be  
sure that your hand be as true !

Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed  
are your flank fusillades —

Twice do we hurl them to earth from  
the ladders to which they had  
clung,

Twice from the ditch where they shel-  
ter we drive them with hand-  
grenades ;

And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew. 60

## V

Then on another wild morning another  
wild earthquake out-tore

Clean from our lines of defence ten or  
twelve good paces or more.

Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden  
there from the light of the sun —

One has leapt up on the breach, crying  
out : ' Follow me, follow  
me !' —

Mark him — he falls ! then another,  
and *him* too, and down goes he.

Had they been bold enough then, who  
can tell but the traitors had  
won ?

Boardings and rafters and doors — an  
embrasure ! make way for the  
gun !

Now double-charge it with grape ! It  
is charged and we fire, and they  
run.

Praise to our Indian brothers, and let  
the dark face have his due !

Thanks to the kindly dark faces who  
fought with us, faithful and  
few, 70

Fought with the bravest among us,  
and drove them, and smote  
them, and slew,

That ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner in India blew.

## VI

Men will forget what we suffer and  
not what we do. We can fight !

But to be soldier all day, and be sentinel all thro' the night —  
 Ever the mine and assault, our sallies, their lying alarms,  
 Bugles and drums in the darkness, and shoutings and soundings to arms,  
 Ever the labor of fifty that had to be done by five,  
 Ever the marvel among us that one should be left alive,  
 Ever the day with its traitorous death from the loopholes around,  
 Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to be laid in the ground, <sup>80</sup>  
 Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge of cataract skies,  
 Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of flies,  
 Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English field,  
 Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that *would* not be heal'd,  
 Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless knife, —  
 Torture and trouble in vain, — for it never could save us a life.  
 Valor of delicate women who tended the hospital bed,  
 Horror of women in travail among the dying and dead,  
 Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment for grief,  
 Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief, <sup>90</sup>  
 Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that we knew —  
 Then day and night, day and night, coming down on the still-shatter'd walls  
 Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-balls —  
 But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

## VII

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what was told by the scout,  
 Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the fell mutineers?  
 Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our ears!  
 All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,  
 Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,

Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,  
 Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers, <sup>100</sup>  
 Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet with their tears!  
 Dance to the pibroch! — saved! we are saved! — is it you? is it you?  
 Saved by the valor of Havelock, saved by the blessing of heaven!  
 'Hold it for fifteen days!' we have held it for eighty-seven!  
 And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.

## SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM

(IN WALES)

My friend should meet me somewhere hereabout  
 To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I trow —  
 I read no more the prisoner's mute wail  
 Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;  
 I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or none,  
 For I am emptier than a friar's brains;  
 But God is with me in this wilderness,  
 These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms —  
 And God's free air, and hope of better things. <sup>10</sup>

I would I knew their speech; not now to glean,  
 Not now — I hope to do it — some scatter'd ears,  
 Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales —  
 But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that wag'd  
 They said with such heretical arrogance  
 Against the proud archbishop Arundel —  
 So much God's cause was fluent in it — is here  
 But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;

'Bara!'—what use? The shepherd,  
when I speak,  
Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard  
'Dim Saesneg,' passes, wroth at things  
of old —<sup>21</sup>  
No fault of mine. Had he God's  
word in Welsh  
He might be kindlier; happily come  
the day!

Not least art thou, thou little Beth-  
lehem  
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was  
born;  
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutter-  
worth,  
Least, for in thee the word was born  
again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living  
word,  
Who whilome spakest to the South in  
Greek<sup>29</sup>  
About the soft Mediterranean shores,  
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,  
As good need was—thou hast come  
to talk our isle.  
Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,  
Must learn to use the tongues of all  
the world.  
Yet art thou thine own witness that  
thou bringest  
Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,  
My frightened Wiclif-preacher whom I  
crost  
In flying hither? that one night a  
crowd  
Throng'd the waste field about the  
city gates;  
The king was on them suddenly with  
a host.<sup>40</sup>  
Why there? they came to hear their  
preacher. Then  
Some cried on Cobham, on the good  
Lord Cobham;  
Ay, for they love me! but the king—  
nor voice  
Nor finger raised against him—took  
and hang'd,  
Took, hang'd and burnt—how many  
—thirty-nine—  
Call'd it rebellion—hang'd, poor  
friends, as rebels  
And burn'd alive as heretics! for your  
priest

Labels—to take the king along with  
him—

All heresy, treason; but to call men  
traitors

May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,  
Red in thy birth, redder with house-  
hold war,<sup>51</sup>  
Now reddest with the blood of holy  
men,

Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster—  
If somewhere in the North, as Rumor  
sang

Fluttering the hawks of this crown-  
lusting line—

By firth and loch thy silver sister  
grow,<sup>1</sup>

That were my rose, there my alle-  
giance due.

Self-starved, they say—nay, mur-  
der'd, doubtless dead.

So to this king I cleaved. My friend  
was he,

Once my fast friend; I would have  
given my life<sup>60</sup>

To help his own from scathe, a thou-  
sand lives

To save his soul. He might have  
come to learn

Our Wiclif's learning; but the worldly  
priests,

Who fear the king's hard common-  
sense should find

What rotten piles uphold their mason-  
work,

Urge him to foreign war. O, had he  
will'd

I might have stricken a lusty stroke  
for him,

But he would not; far liefer led my  
friend

Back to the pure and universal church,  
But he would not—whether that heir-  
less flaw<sup>70</sup>

In his throne's title make him feel so  
frail,

He leans on Antichrist; or that his  
mind,

So quick, so capable in soldiership,  
In matters of the faith, alas the  
while!

More worth than all the kingdoms of  
this world,

Runs in the rut, a coward to the  
priest.

<sup>1</sup> Richard II.

Burnt—good Sir Roger Acton, my  
 dear friend!  
 Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Beverley!  
 Lord, give thou power to thy two  
 witnesses,  
 Lest the false faith make merry over  
 them!  
 Two—nay, but thirty-nine have risen  
 and stand,  
 Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,  
 Before thy light, and cry continually—  
 Cry—against whom?  
 Him, who should bear the sword  
 Of Justice—what! the kingly, kindly  
 boy;  
 Who took the world so easily heretofore,  
 My boon companion, tavern-fellow—  
 him  
 Who jibed and japed—in many a  
 merry tale  
 That shook our sides—at pardoners,  
 summoners,  
 Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries  
 And nunneries, when the wild hour  
 and the wine  
 Had set the wits aflame.  
 Harry of Monmouth,  
 Or Amurath of the East?  
 Better to sink  
 Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and  
 fling  
 Thy royalty back into the riotous  
 fits  
 Of wine and harlotry—thy shame,  
 and mine,  
 Thy comrade—than to persecute the  
 Lord,  
 And play the Saul that never will be  
 Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred  
 Arundel  
 Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the  
 flame,  
 The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his  
 clerks  
 Into the suburb—their hard celibacy,  
 Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness,  
 molten  
 Into adulterous living, or such crimes  
 As holy Paul—a shame to speak of  
 them—  
 Among the heathen—

Sanctuary granted  
 To bandit, thief, assassin—yea, to  
 him  
 Who hacks his mother's throat—denied  
 to him  
 Who finds the Saviour in his mother  
 tongue.  
 The Gospel, the priest's pearl, flung  
 down to swine—  
 The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who  
 will come,  
 God willing, to outlearn the filthy  
 friar.  
 Ah, rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel,  
 meant  
 To course and range thro' all the  
 world, should be  
 Tether'd to these dead pillars of the  
 Church—  
 Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,  
 Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack  
 heart, and life  
 Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how  
 long,  
 O Lord, how long!  
 My friend should meet me here.  
 Here is the copse, the fountain and—  
 a cross!  
 To thee, dead wood, I bow not head  
 nor knees.  
 Rather to thee, green boscase, work  
 of God,  
 Black holly, and white-flower'd way-  
 faring-tree!  
 Rather to thee, thou living water,  
 drawn  
 By this good Wiclif mountain down  
 from heaven,  
 And speaking clearly in thy native  
 tongue—  
 No Latin—He that thirsteth, come  
 and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking  
 me  
 To worship Holy Cross! I spread  
 mine arms,  
 God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and  
 blood  
 And holier. That was heresy.—My  
 good friend  
 By this time should be with me.—  
 'Images?'  
 'Bury them as God's truer images  
 Are daily buried.' 'Heresy.—Pen-  
 ance?' 'Fast,



Hair-shirt and scourge — nay, let a  
 man repent,  
 Do penance in his heart, God hears  
 him.' 'Heresy —  
 Not shriven, not saved?' 'What  
 profits an ill priest  
 Between me and my God? I would  
 not spurn  
 Good counsel of good friends, but  
 shrive myself —  
 No, not to an Apostle.' 'Heresy.' —  
 My friend is long in coming. — 'Pil-  
 grimages?' <sup>141</sup>  
 'Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-  
 dances, vice.  
 The poor man's money gone to fat the  
 friar.  
 Who reads of begging saints in Scrip-  
 ture?' — 'Heresy' —  
 Hath he been here — not found me —  
 gone again?  
 Have I mislearnt our place of meet-  
 ing? — 'Bread —  
 Bread left after the blessing?' how  
 they stared,  
 That was their main test-question —  
 glared at me!  
 'He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now  
 He veils  
 His flesh in bread, body and bread to-  
 gether.' <sup>150</sup>  
 Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd  
 wolves,  
 'No bread, no bread. God's body!'  
 Archbishop, bishop,  
 Priors, canons, friars, bell-ringers,  
 parish-clerks —  
 'No bread, no bread!' — 'Authority  
 of the Church,  
 Power of the keys!' — Then I, God  
 help me, I  
 So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two  
 whole days —  
 I lost myself and fell from evenness,  
 And rail'd at all the Popes that, ever  
 since  
 Sylvester shed the venom of world-  
 wealth  
 Into the church, had only proven  
 themselves <sup>160</sup>  
 Poisoners, murderers. Well — God  
 pardon all —  
 Me, them, and all the world — yes,  
 that proud priest,  
 That mock-meek mouth of utter Anti-  
 christ,

That traitor to King Richard and the  
 truth,  
 Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.  
 Amen!  
 Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of  
 life  
 Be by me in my death.  
 Those three! the fourth  
 Was like the Son of God! Not burnt  
 were they.  
 On *them* the smell of burning had not  
 past.  
 That was a miracle to convert the  
 king. <sup>170</sup>  
 These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arun-  
 del  
 What miracle could turn? *He* here  
 again,  
*He* thwarting their traditions of Him-  
 self,  
*He* would be found a heretic to Him-  
 self,  
 And doom'd to burn alive.  
 So, caught, I burn.  
 Burn? heathen men have borne as  
 much as this,  
 For freedom, or the sake of those they  
 loved,  
 Or some less cause, some cause far less  
 than mine;  
 For every other cause is less than mine.  
 The moth will singe her wings, and  
 singed return, <sup>180</sup>  
 Her love of light quenching her fear  
 of pain —  
 How now, my soul, we do not heed  
 the fire?  
 Faint-hearted? tut! — faint-stom-  
 ach'd! faint as I am,  
 God willing, I will burn for Him.  
 Who comes?  
 A thousand marks are set upon my  
 head.  
 Friend? — foe perhaps — a tussle for  
 it then!  
 Nay, but my friend. Thou art so  
 well disguised,  
 I knew thee not. Hast thou brought  
 bread with thee?  
 I have not broken bread for fifty hours.  
 None? I am damn'd already by the  
 priest <sup>190</sup>  
 For holding there was bread where  
 bread was none —  
 No bread. My friends await me yon-  
 der? Yes.

Lead on then. *Up* the mountain? Is  
it far?  
Not far. Climb first and reach me  
down thy hand.  
I am not like to die for lack of  
bread,  
For I must live to testify by fire.<sup>1</sup>

## COLUMBUS

CHAINS, my good lord! In your  
raised brows I read  
Some wonder at our chamber orna-  
ments.  
We brought this iron from our isles of  
gold.

Does the King know you deign to  
visit him  
Whom once he rose from off his throne  
to greet  
Before his people, like his brother  
king?  
I saw your face that morning in the  
crowd.

At Barcelona—tho' you were not  
then  
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd  
herself  
To meet me, roar'd my name; the  
King, the Queen,<sup>10</sup>  
Bade me be seated, speak, and tell  
them all  
The story of my voyage, and while I  
spoke  
The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace,  
be still!'  
And when I ceased to speak, the King,  
the Queen,  
Sank from their thrones, and melted  
into tears,  
And knelt, and lifted hand and heart  
and voice  
In praise to God who led me thro' the  
waste.  
And then the great 'Laudamus' rose  
to heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean!  
chains  
For him who gave a new heaven, a  
new earth,<sup>20</sup>  
As holy John had prophesied of me,  
<sup>1</sup> He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

Gave glory and more empire to the  
kings  
Of Spain than all their battles! chains  
for him  
Who push'd his prow into the setting  
sun,  
And made West East, and sail'd the  
Dragon's Mouth,  
And came upon the Mountain of the  
World,  
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the  
Ocean, we,  
We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand  
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic  
Queen —<sup>30</sup>  
Of the Ocean—of the Indies—Admi-  
rals we —  
Our title, which we never mean to  
yield,  
Our guerdon not alone for what we  
did,  
But our amends for all we might have  
done —  
The vast occasion of our stronger  
life —  
Eighteen long years of waste, seven  
in your Spain,  
Lost, showing courts and kings a  
truth the babe  
Will suck in with his milk hereafter  
— earth  
A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca? No.  
We fronted there the learning of all  
Spain,<sup>40</sup>  
All their cosmogonies, their astrono-  
mies.  
Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the  
golden guess  
Is morning-star to the full round of  
truth.  
No guess-work! I was certain of my  
goal;  
Some thought it heresy, but that would  
not hold.  
King David call'd the heavens a hide,  
a tent  
Spread over earth, and so this earth  
was flat.  
Some cited old Lactantius; could it  
be  
That trees grew downward, rain fell  
upward, men

Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and  
besides,<sup>50</sup>  
The great Augustine wrote that none  
could breathe  
Within the zone of heat; so might  
there be  
Two Adams, two mankinds, and that  
was clean  
Against God's word. Thus was I  
beaten back,  
And chiefly to my sorrow by the  
Church,  
And thought to turn my face from  
Spain, appeal  
Once more to France or England; but  
our Queen  
Recall'd me, for at last their High-  
nesses  
Were half-assured this earth might be  
a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,  
All glory to the mother of our Lord,<sup>61</sup>  
And Holy Church, from whom I never  
swerved  
Not even by one hair's-breadth of  
heresy,  
I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet—not all—last night a  
dream—I sail'd  
On my first voyage, harass'd by the  
frights  
Of my first crew, their curses and  
their groans,  
The great flame-banner borne by Ten-  
eriffe,  
The compass, like an old friend false  
at last  
In our most need, appall'd them, and  
the wind<sup>70</sup>  
Still westward, and the weedy seas—  
at length  
The land-bird, and the branch with  
berries on it,  
The carven staff—and last the light,  
the light  
On Guanahani! but I changed the  
name;  
San Salvador I call'd it; and the light  
Grew as I gazed, and brought out a  
broad sky  
Of dawning over—not those alien  
palms,  
The marvel of that fair new nature—  
not

That Indian isle, but our most ancient  
East,  
Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw so  
The glory of the Lord flash up, and  
beat  
Thro' all the homely town from jasper,  
sapphire,  
Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sar-  
dius,  
Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,  
Jacinth, and amethyst—and those  
twelve gates,  
Pearl—and I woke, and thought—  
death—I shall die—  
I am written in the Lamb's own Book  
of Life  
To walk within the glory of the Lord  
Sunless and moonless, utter light—  
but no!  
The Lord had sent this bright, strange  
dream to me<sup>90</sup>  
To mind me of the secret vow I  
made  
When Spain was waging war against  
the Moor—  
I strove myself with Spain against the  
Moor.  
There came two voices from the Sep-  
ulchre,  
Two friars crying that, if Spain should  
oust  
The Moslem from her limit, he, the  
fierce  
Soldan of Egypt, would break down  
and raze  
The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon  
I vow'd  
That, if our princes harken'd to my  
prayer,  
Whatever wealth I brought from that  
new world<sup>100</sup>  
Should, in this old, be consecrate to  
lead  
A new crusade against the Saracen,  
And free the Holy Sepulchre from  
thrall.

Gold? I had brought your princes  
gold enough  
If left alone! Being but a Genovese,  
I am handled worse than had I been a  
Moor,  
And breach'd the belting wall of Cam-  
balu,  
And given the Great Khan's palaces  
to the Moor.

Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Pres-  
 ter John,  
 And cast it to the Moor. But *had* I  
 brought <sup>110</sup>  
 From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir  
 all  
 The gold that Solomon's navies carried  
 home,  
 Would that have gild'd *me*? Blue  
 blood of Spain,  
 Tho' quartering your own royal arms  
 of Spain,  
 I have not; blue blood and black  
 blood of Spain,  
 The noble and the convict of Castile,  
 How'd me from Hispaniola. For you  
 know  
 The flies at home, that ever swarm  
 about  
 And cloud the highest heads, and  
 murmur down  
 Truth in the distance—these out-  
 buzz'd me so <sup>120</sup>  
 That even our prudent King, our  
 righteous Queen—  
 I pray'd them being so calumniated  
 They would commission one of weight  
 and worth  
 To judge between my slander'd self  
 and me—  
 Fonseca my main enemy at their court,  
 They sent me out *his* tool, Bovadilla,  
 one  
 As ignorant and impolitic as a beast—  
 Blockish irreverence, brainless greed  
 — who sack'd  
 My dwelling, seized upon my papers,  
 loosed  
 My captives, feed the rebels of the  
 crown, <sup>130</sup>  
 Sold the crown-farms for all but no-  
 thing, gave  
 All but free leave for all to work the  
 mines,  
 Drove me and my good brothers home  
 in chains,  
 And gathering ruthless gold—a single  
 piece  
 Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castilla-  
 nos—so  
 They tell me—weigh'd him down  
 into the abyss—  
 The hurricane of the latitude on him  
 fell,  
 The seas of our discovering over-roll  
 Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,

With what was mine, came happily to  
 the shore. <sup>140</sup>  
*There* was a glimmering of God's  
 hand.

And God  
 Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O  
 my lord,  
 I swear to you I heard His voice be-  
 tween  
 The thunders in the black Veragua  
 nights,  
 'O soul of little faith, slow to believe!  
 Have I not been about thee from thy  
 birth?  
 Given thee the keys of the great Ocean-  
 sea?  
 Set thee in light till time shall be no  
 more?  
 Is it I who have deceived thee or the  
 world?  
 Endure! thou hast done so well for  
 men, that men <sup>150</sup>  
 Cry out against thee. Was it other-  
 wise  
 With mine own Son?'

And more than once in days  
 Of doubt and cloud and storm, when  
 drowning hope  
 Sank all but out of sight, I heard His  
 voice,  
 'Be not cast down. I lead thee by  
 the hand,  
 Fear not.' And I shall hear His voice  
 again—  
 I know that He has led me all my  
 life,  
 I am not yet too old to work His  
 will—  
 His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,  
 I lying here bedridden and alone, <sup>160</sup>  
 Cast off, put by, scouted by court and  
 king—  
 The first discoverer starves—his fol-  
 lowers, all  
 Flower into fortune—our world's  
 way—and I,  
 Without a roof that I can call mine  
 own,  
 With scarce a coin to buy a meal  
 withal,  
 And seeing what a door for scoundrel  
 scam

I open'd to the West, thro' which the  
 lust,  
 Villainy, violence, avarice, of your  
 Spain  
 Pour'd in on all those happy naked  
 isles —  
 Their kindly native princes slain or  
 slaved, 170  
 Their wives and children Spanish con-  
 cubines,  
 Their innocent hospitalities quench'd  
 in blood,  
 Some dead of hunger, some beneath  
 the scourge,  
 Some over-labor'd, some by their own  
 hands, —  
 Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Na-  
 ture, kill  
 Their babies at the breast for hate of  
 Spain —  
 Ah God, the harmless people whom  
 we found  
 In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!  
 Who took us for the very gods from  
 heaven,  
 And we have sent them very fiends  
 from hell; 180  
 And I myself, myself not blameless, I  
 Could sometimes wish I had never led  
 the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic  
 Queen  
 Smiles on me, saying, 'Be thou com-  
 forted!  
 This creedless people will be brought  
 to Christ  
 And own the holy governance of  
 Rome.'

But who could dream that we, who  
 bore the Cross  
 Thither, were excommunicated there,  
 For curbing crimes that scandalized  
 the Cross,  
 By him, the Catalanian Minorite, 190  
 Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who be-  
 lieve  
 These hard memorials of our truth to  
 Spain  
 Clung closer to us for a longer term  
 Than any friend of ours at Court?  
 and yet  
 Pardon — too harsh, unjust. I am  
 rack'd with pains.

You see that I have hung them by  
 my bed,  
 And I will have them buried in my  
 grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are  
 God's  
 Own voice to justify the dead — per-  
 chance  
 Spain, once the most chivalric race  
 on earth, 200  
 Spain, then the mightiest, wealthiest  
 realm on earth,  
 So made by me, may seek to unbury  
 me,  
 To lay me in some shrine of this old  
 Spain,  
 Or in that vaster Spain I leave to  
 Spain.  
 Then some one standing by my grave  
 will say,  
 'Behold the bones of Christopher Co-  
 lön' —  
 'Ay, but the chains, what do *they*  
 mean — the chains?'  
 I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain  
 Who then will have to answer, 'These  
 same chains  
 Bound these same bones back thro'  
 the Atlantic sea, 210  
 Which he unchain'd for all the world  
 to come.'

O Queen of Heaven who seest the  
 souls in hell  
 And purgatory, I suffer all as much  
 As they do — for the moment. Stay,  
 my son  
 Is here anon; my son will speak for  
 me  
 Ablier than I can in these spasms that  
 grind  
 Bone against bone. You will not.  
 One last word.

You move about the Court: I pray  
 you tell  
 King Ferdinand who plays with me,  
 that one  
 Whose life has been no play with him  
 and his 220  
 Hidalgos — shipwrecks, famines, fe-  
 vers, fights,  
 Mutinies, treacheries — wink'd at, and  
 condoned —

That I am loyal to him till the death,  
 And ready — tho' our Holy Catholic  
 Queen,  
 Who fain had pledged her jewels on  
 my first voyage,  
 Whose hope was mine to spread the  
 Catholic faith,  
 Who wept with me when I return'd  
 in chains,  
 Who sits beside the blessed Virgin  
 now,  
 To whom I send my prayer by night  
 and day —  
 She is gone — but you will tell the  
 King, that I,  
 Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd  
 with pains  
 Gain'd in the service of His Highness,  
 yet  
 Am ready to sail forth on one last  
 voyage,  
 And readier, if the King would hear,  
 to lead  
 One last crusade against the Saracen,  
 And save the Holy Sepulchre from  
 thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted; you  
 have dared  
 Somewhat perhaps in coming? my  
 poor thanks!  
 I am but an alien and a Genovese.

## THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND  
 A. D. 700)

## I

I WAS the chief of the race — he had  
 stricken my father dead —  
 But I gather'd my fellows together, I  
 swore I would strike off his  
 head.  
 Each of them look'd like a king, and  
 was noble in birth as in worth,  
 And each of them boasted he sprang  
 from the oldest race upon earth.  
 Each was as brave in the fight as the  
 bravest hero of song,  
 And each of them liefer had died than  
 have done one another a wrong.  
 He lived on an isle in the ocean — we  
 sail'd on a Friday morn —  
 He that had slain my father the day  
 before I was born.

## II

And we came to the isle in the ocean,  
 and there on the shore was  
 he.  
 But a sudden blast blew us out and  
 away thro' a boundless sea. 10

## III

And we came to the Silent Isle that  
 we never had touch'd at before,  
 Where a silent ocean always broke on  
 a silent shore,  
 And the brooks glitter'd on in the  
 light without sound, and the  
 long waterfalls  
 Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the  
 base of the mountain walls,  
 And the poplar and cypress unshaken  
 by storm flourish'd up beyond  
 sight,  
 And the pine shot aloft from the crag  
 to an unbelievable height,  
 And high in the heaven above it there  
 flicker'd a songless lark,  
 And the cock could n't crow, and the  
 bull could n't low, and the dog  
 could n't bark.  
 And round it we went, and thro' it,  
 but never a murmur, a breath —  
 It was all of it fair as life, it was all  
 of it quiet as death, 20  
 And we hated the beautiful isle, for  
 whenever we strove to speak  
 Our voices were thinner and fainter  
 than any flittermouse shriek;  
 And the men that were mighty of  
 tongue and could raise such a  
 battle-cry  
 That a hundred who heard it would  
 rush on a thousand lances and  
 die —  
 O, they to be dumb'd by the charm!  
 — so fluster'd with anger were  
 they  
 They almost fell on each other; but  
 after we sail'd away.

## IV

And we came to the Isle of Shouting;  
 we landed, a score of wild birds  
 Cried from the topmost summit with  
 human voices and words.  
 Once in an hour they cried, and when-  
 ever their voices peal'd 25  
 The steer fell down at the plow and  
 the harvest died from the field,

And the men dropt dead in the valleys  
 and half of the cattle went lame,  
 And the roof sank in on the hearth,  
 and the dwelling broke into  
 flame ;  
 And the shouting of these wild birds  
 ran into the hearts of my crew,  
 Till they shouted along with the  
 shouting and seized one another  
 and slew.  
 But I drew them the one from the  
 other ; I saw that we could not  
 stay,  
 And we left the dead to the birds, and  
 we sail'd with our wounded  
 away.

## V

And we came to the Isle of Flowers ;  
 their breath met us out on the  
 seas,  
 For the Spring and the middle Sum-  
 mer sat each on the lap of the  
 breeze ;  
 And the red passion-flower to the cliffs,  
 and the dark-blue clematis,  
 clung,  
 And starr'd with a myriad blossom the  
 long convolvulus hung ; 40  
 And the topmost spire of the moun-  
 tain was lilies in lieu of snow,  
 And the lilies like glaciers winded  
 down, running out below  
 Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy,  
 the blaze of gorse, and the blush  
 Of millions of roses that sprang with-  
 out leaf or a thorn from the  
 bush ;  
 And the whole isle-side flashing down  
 from the peak without ever a  
 tree  
 Swept like a torrent of gems from the  
 sky to the blue of the sea.  
 And we roll'd upon capes of crocus  
 and vaunted our kith and our  
 kin,  
 And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and  
 chanted the triumph of Finn,  
 Till each like a golden image was pol-  
 len'd from head to feet  
 And each was as dry as a cricket, with  
 thirst in the middle-day heat. 50  
 Blossom and blossom, and promise of  
 blossom, but never a fruit !  
 And we hated the Flowering Isle, as  
 we hated the isle that was mute,

And we tore up the flowers by the  
 million and flung them in bight  
 and bay,  
 And we left but a naked rock, and in  
 anger we sail'd away.

## VI

And we came to the Isle of Fruits ; all  
 round from the cliffs and the  
 capes,  
 Purple or amber, dangled a hundred  
 fathom of grapes,  
 And the warm melon lay like a little  
 sun on the tawny sand,  
 And the fig ran up from the beach and  
 rioted over the land,  
 And the mountain arose like a jewell'd  
 throne thro' the fragrant air,  
 Glowing with all-color'd plums and  
 with golden masses of pear, 60  
 And the crimson and scarlet of berries  
 that flamed upon bine and vine,  
 But in every berry and fruit was the  
 poisonous pleasure of wine ;  
 And the peak of the mountain was  
 apples, the hugest that ever  
 were seen,  
 And they prest, as they grew, on each  
 other, with hardly a leaflet be-  
 tween,  
 And all of them redder than rosiest  
 health or than utterest shame.  
 And setting, when Even descended,  
 the very sunset aflame.  
 And we stay'd three days, and we  
 gorged and we madden'd, till  
 every one drew  
 His sword on his fellow to slay him,  
 and ever they struck and they  
 slew ;  
 And myself, I had eaten but sparely,  
 and fought till I sunder'd the  
 fray,  
 Then I bade them remember my fa-  
 ther's death, and we sail'd away.

## VII

And we came to the Isle of Fire ; we  
 were lured by the light from  
 afar, 71  
 For the peak sent up one league of fire  
 to the Northern Star ;  
 Lured by the glare and the blare, but  
 scarcely could stand upright,  
 For the whole isle shudder'd and shook  
 like a man in a mortal affright.

We were giddy besides with the fruits  
we had gorged, and so crazed  
that at last

There were some leap'd into the fire ;  
and away we sail'd, and we past  
Over that undersea isle, where the  
water is clearer than air.

Down we look'd — what a garden ! O  
bliss, what a Paradise there !

Towers of a happier time, low down  
in a rainbow deep

Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal  
sleep ! <sup>80</sup>

And three of the gentlest and best of  
my people, whate'er I could say,

Plunged head-down in the sea, and  
the Paradise trembled away.

## VIII

And we came to the Bounteous Isle,  
where the heavens lean low on  
the land,

And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd  
o'er us a sun-bright hand,

Then it open'd and dropt at the side of  
each man, as he rose from his  
rest,

Bread enough for his need till the labor-  
less day dipt under the west ;

And we wander'd about it and thro' it.  
O, never was time so good !

And we sang of the triumphs of Finn,  
and the boast of our ancient  
blood,

And we gazed at the wandering wave  
as we sat by the gurgle of  
springs, <sup>85</sup>

And we chanted the songs of the Bards  
and the glories of fairy kings.

But at length we began to be weary,  
to sigh, and to stretch and yawn,

Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and  
the sun-bright hand of the dawn,

For there was not an enemy near, but  
the whole green isle was our  
own,

And we took to playing at ball, and  
we took to throwing the stone,

And we took to playing at battle, but  
that was a perilous play,

For the passion of battle was in us, we  
slew and we sail'd away.

## IX

And we came to the Isle of Witches  
and heard their musical cry —

'Come to us, O, come, come !' in the  
stormy red of a sky

Dashing the fires and the shadows of  
dawn on the beautiful shapes,

For a wild witch naked as heaven  
stood on each of the loftiest  
capes, <sup>100</sup>

And a hundred ranged on the rock like  
white sea-birds in a row,

And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced  
on the wrecks in the sand below,

And a hundred splash'd from the  
ledges, and bosom'd the burst  
of the spray ;

But I knew we should fall on each  
other, and hastily sail'd away.

## X

And we came in an evil time to the  
Isle of the Double Towers,

One was of smooth-cut stone, one  
carved all over with flowers,

But an earthquake always moved in  
the hollows under the dells,

And they shock'd on each other and  
budded each other with clashing  
of bells,

And the daws flew out of the towers  
and jangled and wrangled in  
vain,

And the clash and boom of the bells  
rang into the heart and the  
brain, <sup>110</sup>

Till the passion of battle was on us,  
and all took sides with the  
towers,

There were some for the clean-cut  
stone, there were more for the  
carven flowers,

And the wrathful thunder of God  
peal'd over us all the day,

For the one half slew the other, and  
after we sail'd away.

## XI

And we came to the Isle of a Saint  
who had sail'd with Saint Bren-  
dan of yore,

He had lived ever since on the isle  
and his winters were fifteen  
score,

And his voice was low as from other  
worlds, and his eyes were sweet,

And his white hair sank to his heels,  
and his white beard fell to his  
feet,



And he spake to me : ' O Maeldune,  
 let be this purpose of thine !  
 Remember the words of the Lord  
 when he told us, " Vengeance  
 is mine ! " <sup>120</sup>  
 His fathers have slain thy fathers in  
 war or in single strife,  
 Thy fathers have slain his fathers,  
 each taken a life for a life,  
 Thy father had slain his father, how  
 long shall the murder last ?  
 Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer  
 the Past to be Past.  
 And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard,  
 and we pray'd as we heard  
 him pray,  
 And the holy man he assoil'd us, and  
 sadly we sail'd away.

## XII

And we came to the isle we were  
 blown from, and there on the  
 shore was he,  
 The man that had slain my father. I  
 saw him and let him be.  
 O, weary was I of the travel, the  
 trouble, the strife, and the sin,  
 When I landed again with a tithe of  
 my men, on the Isle of Finn ! <sup>130</sup>

## DE PROFUNDIS :

## THE TWO GREETINGS

## I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 Where all that was to be, in all that  
 was,  
 Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the  
 vast  
 Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy-  
 ing light —  
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 Thro' all this changing world of  
 changeless law,  
 And every phase of ever-heightening  
 life,  
 And nine long months of antenatal  
 gloom,  
 With this last moon, this crescent —  
 her dark orb  
 Touch'd with earth's light — thou  
 comest, darling boy ;

Our own ; a babe in lineament and  
 limb  
 Perfect, and prophet of the perfect  
 man ;  
 Whose face and form are hers and  
 mine in one,  
 Indissolubly married like our love.  
 Live, and be happy in thyself, and  
 serve  
 This mortal race thy kin so well that  
 men  
 May bless thee as we bless thee, O  
 young life  
 Breaking with laughter from the  
 dark ; and may  
 The fated channel where thy motion  
 lives  
 Be prosperously shaped, and sway  
 thy course  
 Along the years of haste and random  
 youth  
 Unshatter'd ; then full-current thro'  
 full man ;  
 And last in kindly curves, with gen-  
 tlest fall,  
 By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,  
 To that last deep where we and thou  
 are still.

## II

## I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 From that great deep, before our  
 world begins,  
 Whereon the Spirit of God moves as  
 he will —  
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 From that true world within the  
 world we see,  
 Whereof our world is but the bound-  
 ing shore —  
 Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the  
 deep,  
 With this ninth moon, that sends the  
 hidden sun  
 Down yon dark sea, thou comest, dar-  
 ling boy.

## II

For in the world which is not ours  
 They said,  
 ' Let us make man,' and that which  
 should be man,

From that one light no man can look  
upon,  
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and  
moons  
And all the shadows. O dear Spirit,  
half-lost  
In thine own shadow and this fleshly  
sign  
That thou art thou—who wailest be-  
ing born  
And banish'd into mystery, and the  
pain  
Of this divisible-indivisible world  
Among the numerable-innumerable  
Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite  
space  
In finite-infinite Time—our mortal  
veil  
And shatter'd phantom of that infinite  
One,  
Who made thee unconceivably Thy-  
self  
Out of His whole World-self and all  
in all—  
Live thou! and of the grain and husk,  
the grape  
And ivy-berry, choose; and still de-  
part  
From death to death thro' life and  
life, and find  
Nearer and ever nearer Him, who  
wrought  
Not matter, nor the finite-infinite,  
But this main-miracle, that thou art  
thou,  
With power on thine own act and on  
the world.

## THE HUMAN CRY

## I

HALLOWED be Thy name—Hallelu-  
iah!—  
Infinite Ideality!  
Immeasurable Reality!  
Infinite Personality!  
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

## II

We feel we are nothing—for all is  
Thou and in Thee;  
We feel we are something—that also  
has come from Thee;  
We know we are nothing—but Thou  
wilt help us to be.  
Hallowed be Thy name--Halleluiah!

## SONNETS

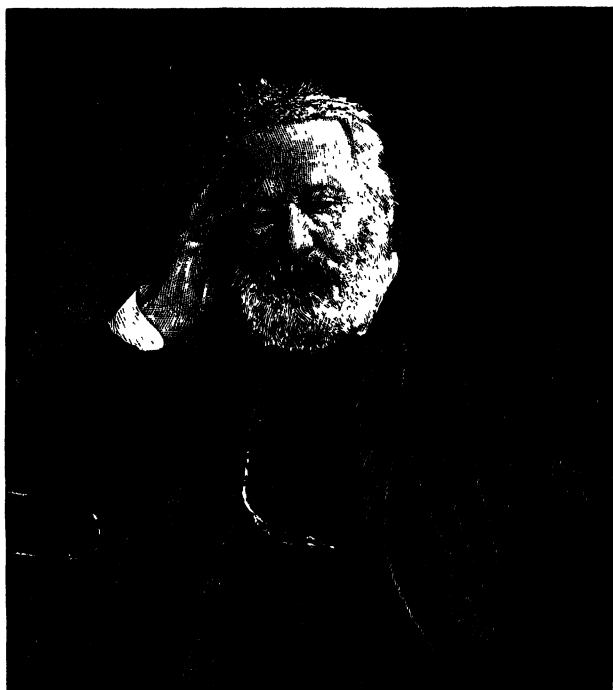
## PREFATORY SONNET

## TO 'THE NINETEENTH CENTURY'

THOSE that of late had fled far and  
fast  
To touch all shores, now leaving to  
the skill  
Of others their old craft seaworthy  
still,  
Have charter'd this; where, mindful  
of the past,  
Our true co-mates regather round the  
mast;  
Of diverse tongue, but with a com-  
mon will  
Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil  
And crocus, to put forth and brave  
the blast.  
For some, descending from the sacred  
peak  
Of hoar high-templed Faith, have  
leagued again  
Their lot with ours to rove the world  
about;  
And some are wilder comrades, sworn  
to seek  
If any golden harbor be for men  
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of  
Doubt.

## TO THE REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that  
knew you best,  
Old Brooks, who loved so well to  
mouth my rhymes,  
How oft we two have heard Saint  
Mary's chimes!  
How oft the Cantab supper, host and  
guest,  
Would echo helpless laughter to your  
jest!  
How oft with him we paced that walk  
of limes,  
Him, the lost light of those dawn-  
golden times,  
Who loved you well! Now both are  
gone to rest.  
You man of humorous-melancholy  
mark,  
Dead of some inward agony—is it so?  
Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past  
away!



VICTOR HUGO

I cannot laud this life, it looks so  
dark:

*Σκιάς ὄναρ*—dream of a shadow, go—  
God bless you! I shall join you in a  
day.

#### MONTENEGRO

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle  
sails,

They kept their faith, their freedom,  
on the height,

Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day  
and night

Against the Turk; whose inroad no-  
where scales

Their headlong passes, but his foot-  
step fails,

And red with blood the Crescent reels  
from fight

Before their dauntless hundreds, in  
prone flight

By thousands down the crags and thro  
the vales.

O smallest among peoples! rough  
rock-throne

Of Freedom! warriors beating back  
the swarm

Of Turkish Islam for five hundred  
years,

Great Tsernogora! never since thine  
own

Black ridges drew the cloud and brake  
the storm

Has breathed a race of mightier moun-  
taineers.

#### TO VICTOR HUGO

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,  
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes

and fears,  
French of the French, and Lord of  
human tears;

Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit  
laurels glance  
Darkening the wreaths of all that  
would advance,  
Beyond our strait, their claim to be  
thy peers;  
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of  
years  
As yet unbroken, stormy voice of  
France!  
Who dost not love our England — so  
they say;  
I know not — England, France, all  
man to be  
Will make one people ere man's race  
be run:  
And I, desiring that diviner day,  
Yield thee full thanks for thy full  
courtesy  
To younger England in the boy my  
son.

TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

I

<sup>1</sup> ATHELSTAN King,  
Lord among Earls,  
Bracelet-bestower and  
Baron of Barons,  
He with his brother,  
Edmund Atheling,  
Gaining a lifelong  
Glory in battle,  
Slew with the sword-edge  
There by Brunanburh,  
Brake the shield-wall,  
Hew'd the linden-wood,<sup>2</sup>  
Hack'd the battle-shield,  
Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

II

Theirs was a greatness  
Got from their grandsires —  
Theirs that so often in  
Strife with their enemies  
Struck for their hoards and their  
hearths and their homes.

<sup>1</sup> I have more or less availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the 'Contemporary Review' (November, 1876).

<sup>2</sup> Shields of lindenwood.

III

Bow'd the spoiler,  
Bent the Scotsman,  
Fell the ship-crews  
Doom'd to the death.  
All the field with blood of the fighters  
Flow'd, from when first the  
great  
Sun-star of morning-tide,  
Lamp of the Lord God  
Lord everlasting,  
Glode over earth till the glorious crea-  
ture  
Sank to his setting.

IV

There lay many a man  
Marr'd by the javelin,  
Men of the Northland  
Shot over shield.  
There was the Scotsman  
Weary of war.

V

We the West-Saxons,  
Long as the daylight  
Lasted, in companies  
Troubled the track of the host that we  
hated;  
Grimly with swords that were sharp  
from the grindstone,  
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before  
us.

VI

Mighty the Mercian,  
Hard was his hand-play,  
Sparing not any of  
Those that with Anlaf,  
Warriors over the  
Weltering waters  
Borne in the bark's-bosom,  
Drew to this island —  
Doom'd to the death.

VII

Five young kings put asleep by the  
swordstroke,  
Seven strong earls of the army of  
Anlaf  
Fell on the war-field, numberless num-  
bers,  
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

## VIII

Then the Norse leader —  
 Dire was his need of it,  
 Few were his following —  
 Fleed to his war-ship ;  
 Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king  
     in it,  
 Saving his life on the fallow flood.

## IX

Also the crafty one,  
 Constantinus,  
 Crept to his North again,  
 Hoar-headed hero !

## X

Slender warrant had  
*He* to be proud of  
 The welcome of war-knives —  
 He that was reft of his  
 Folk and his friends that had  
 Fallen in conflict,  
 Leaving his son too  
 Lost in the carnage,  
 Mangled to morsels,  
 A youngster in war !

## XI

Slender reason had  
*He* to be glad of  
 The clash of the war-glaive —  
 Traitor and trickster  
 And spurner of treaties —  
 He nor had Anlaf  
 With armies so broken  
 A reason for bragging  
 That they had the better  
 In perils of battle  
 On places of slaughter —  
 The struggle of standards,  
 The rush of the javelins,  
 The crash of the charges,<sup>1</sup>  
 The wielding of weapons —  
 The play that they play'd with  
 The children of Edward.

## XII

Then with their nail'd prows  
 Parted the Norsemen, a  
 Blood-redden'd relic of  
 Javelins over  
 The jarring breaker, the deep-sea bil-  
     low,

<sup>1</sup> Lit. 'the gathering of men.'

Shaping their way toward Dyflen<sup>1</sup>  
     again,  
 Shamed in their souls.

## XIII

Also the brethren,  
 King and Atheling,  
 Each in his glory,  
 Went to his own in his own West-  
     Saxonland,  
 Glad of the war.

## XIV

Many a carcass they left to be carrion,  
 Many a livid one, many a fallow-skin —  
 Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear  
     it, and  
 Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to  
     rend it, and  
 Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to  
     gorge it, and  
 That gray beast, the wolf of the  
     weald.

## XV

Never had huger  
 Slaughter of heroes  
 Slain by the sword-edge —  
 Such as old writers  
 Have writ of in histories —  
 Hapt in this isle, since  
 Up from the East hither  
 Saxon and Angle from  
 Over the broad billow  
 Broke into Britain with  
 Haughty war-workers who  
 Harried the Welshman, when  
 Earls that were lured by the  
 Hunger of glory gat  
 Hold of the land.

## ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH

[ILIAD, XVIII. 202]

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.  
 Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus ; and  
     round  
 The warrior's puissant shoulders Pal-  
     las flung  
 Her fringed ægis, and around his head  
 The glorious goddess wreath'd a golden  
     cloud,

<sup>1</sup> Dublin.



DANTE ALIGHIERI

And from it lighted an all-shining  
 flame.  
 As when a smoke from a city goes to  
 heaven  
 Far off from out an island girt 'by  
 foes,  
 All day the men contend in grievous  
 war  
 From their own city, but with set of  
 sun  
 Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the  
 glare  
 Flies streaming, if perchance the  
 neighbors round  
 May see, and sail to help them in the  
 war;  
 So from his head the splendor went to  
 heaven.

From wall to dyke he stept, he stood,  
 nor join'd  
 The Achæans — honoring his wise mo-  
 ther's word —  
 There standing, shouted, and Pallas  
 far away  
 Call'd; and a boundless panic shook  
 the foe.  
 For like the clear voice when a trum-  
 pet shrills,  
 Blown by the fierce beleaguerers of a  
 town,  
 So rang the clear voice of Æakidēs;  
 And when the brazen cry of Æakidēs  
 Was heard among the Trojans, all  
 their hearts  
 Were troubled, and the full-maned  
 horses whirl'd

The chariots backward, knowing  
 griefs at hand;  
 And sheer-astounded were the char-  
 ioteers  
 To see the dread, unweariable fire  
 That always o'er the great Peleion's  
 head  
 Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess  
 made it burn.  
 Thrice from the dyke he sent his  
 mighty shout,  
 Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans  
 and allies;  
 And there and then twelve of their  
 noblest died  
 Among their spears and chariots.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA ON  
 HER MARRIAGE

O you that were eyes and light to the  
 King till he past away  
 From the darkness of life—  
 He saw not his daughter—he blest  
 her: the blind King sees you  
 to-day,  
 He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

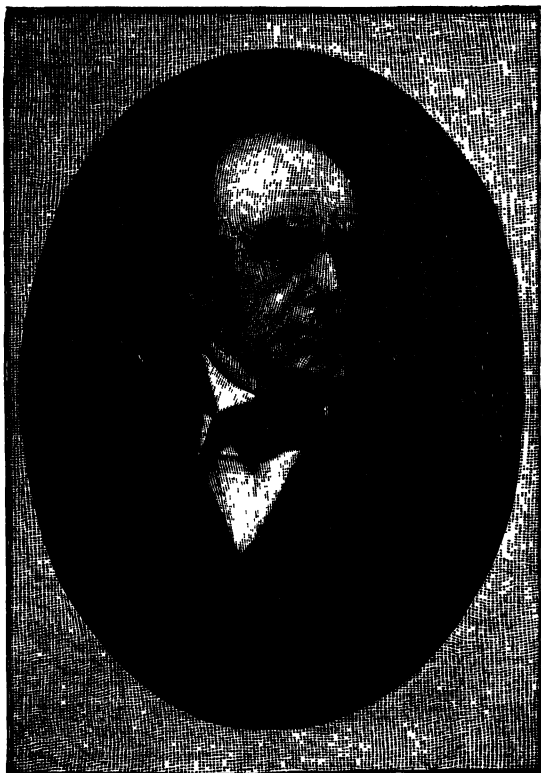
ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER  
 ABBEY

Not here! the white North has thy  
 bones; and thou,  
 Heroic sailor-soul,  
 Art passing on thine happier voyage  
 now  
 Toward no earthly pole.

TO DANTE

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE FLOR-  
 ENTINES)

King, that hast reign'd six hundred  
 years, and grown  
 In power, and ever growest, since  
 thine own  
 Fair Florence honoring thy nativity,  
 Thy Florence now the crown of Italy.  
 Hath sought the tribute of a verse  
 from me,  
 I, wearing but the garland of a day,  
 Cast at thy feet one flower that fades  
 away.



EDWARD FITZGERALD

## TIRESIAS AND OTHER POEMS

### DEDICATION

TO MY GOOD FRIEND

ROBERT BROWNING

WHOSE GENIUS AND GENIALITY WILL BEST APPRECIATE WHAT MAY BE BEST  
AND MAKE MOST ALLOWANCE FOR WHAT MAY BE WORST, THIS VOLUME IS  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

TO E. FITZGERALD

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb  
grange,

Where once I tarried for a while,  
Glance at the wheeling orb of change,  
And greet it with a kindly smile;

Whom yet I see as there you sit  
Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,  
And watch your doves about you flit,  
And plant on shoulder, hand, and  
knee,  
Or on your head their rosy feet,  
As if they knew your diet spares



Whatever moved in that full sheet  
 Let down to Peter at his prayers ;  
 Who live on milk and meal and grass ;  
 And once for ten long weeks I tried  
 Your table of Pythagoras,  
 And seem'd at first 'a thing enskied,'  
 As Shakespeare has it, airy-light  
 To float above the ways of men,  
 Then fell from that half-spiritual  
 height  
 Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again  
 One night when earth was winter-  
 black,  
 And all the heavens flash'd in frost ;  
 And on me, half-asleep, came back  
 That wholesome heat the blood had  
 lost,  
 And set me climbing icy capes  
 And glaciers, over which there  
 roll'd  
 To meet me long-arm'd vines with  
 grapes  
 Of Eschol hugeness ; for the cold  
 Without, and warmth within me,  
 wrought  
 To mould the dream ; but none can  
 say  
 That Lenten fare makes Lenten  
 thought  
 Who reads your golden Eastern  
 lay,  
 Than which I know no version done  
 In English more divinely well ;  
 A planet equal to the sun  
 Which cast it, that large infidel  
 Your Omar ; and your Omar drew  
 Full-handed plaudits from our best  
 In modern letters, and from two,  
 Old friends outvaluing all the rest,  
 Two voices heard on earth no more ;  
 But we old friends are still alive,  
 And I am nearing seventy-four,  
 While you have touch'd at seventy-  
 five,  
 And so I send a birthday line  
 Of greeting ; and my son, who dipt  
 In some forgotten book of mine  
 With sallow scraps of manuscript,  
 And dating many a year ago,  
 Has hit on this, which you will take,  
 My Fitz, and welcome, as I know,  
 Less for its own than for the sake  
 Of one recalling gracious times,  
 When, in our younger London days,  
 You found some merit in my rhymes,  
 And I more pleasure in your praise.

## TIRESIAS

I WISH I were as in the days of old,  
 While yet the blessed daylight made  
 itself  
 Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight,  
 and woke  
 These eyes, now dull, but then so keen  
 to seek  
 The meanings ambush'd under all they  
 saw,  
 The flight of birds, the flame of sacri-  
 fice,  
 What omens may foreshadow fate to  
 man  
 And woman, and the secret of the  
 Gods.  
 My son, the Gods, despite of human  
 prayer,  
 Are slower to forgive than human  
 kings.  
 The great God Arès burns in anger  
 still  
 Against the guiltless heirs of him from  
 Tyre,  
 Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art,  
 who found  
 Beside the springs of Dircé, smote, and  
 still'd  
 Thro' all its folds the multitudinous  
 beast,  
 The dragon, which our trembling fa-  
 thers call'd  
 The God's own son.  
 A tale, that told to me,  
 When but thine age, by age as win-  
 ter-white  
 As mine is now, amazed, but made me  
 yearn  
 For larger glimpses of that more than  
 man  
 Which rolls the heavens, and lifts and  
 lays the deep,  
 Yet loves and hates with mortal hates  
 and loves,  
 And moves unseen among the ways  
 of men.  
 Then, in my wanderings all the  
 lands that lie  
 Subjected to the Heliconian ridge  
 Have heard this footstep fall, altho'  
 my wont  
 Was more to scale the highest of the  
 heights  
 With some strange hope to see the  
 nearer God.

One naked peak — the sister of the  
 Sun  
 Would climb from out the dark, and  
 linger there 30  
 To silver all the valleys with her  
 shafts —  
 There once, but long ago, five-fold thy  
 term  
 Of years, I lay; the winds were dead  
 for heat;  
 The noonday crag made the hand  
 burn; and sick  
 For shadow — not one bush was near  
 — I rose,  
 Following a torrent till its myriad falls  
 Found silence in the hollows under-  
 neath.

There in a secret olive-glade I saw  
 Pallas Athene climbing from the bath  
 In anger; yet one glittering foot dis-  
 turb'd 40  
 The lucid well; one snowy knee was  
 prest  
 Against the margin flowers; a dread-  
 ful light  
 Came from her golden hair, her golden  
 helm  
 And all her golden armor on the grass,  
 And from her virgin breast, and vir-  
 gin eyes  
 Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew  
 dark  
 For ever, and I heard a voice that  
 said,  
 'Henceforth be blind, for thou hast  
 seen too much,  
 And speak the truth that no man may  
 believe.'

Son, in the hidden world of sight  
 that lives 50  
 Behind this darkness, I behold her  
 still,  
 Beyond all work of those who carve  
 the stone,  
 Beyond all dreams of Godlike woman-  
 hood,  
 Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a  
 glance,  
 And as it were, perforce, upon me  
 flash'd  
 The power of prophesying — but to  
 me  
 No power — so chain'd and coupled  
 with the curse  
 Of blindness and their unbelief who  
 heard

And heard not, when I spake of fa-  
 mine, plague,  
 Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire,  
 flood, thunderbolt, 60  
 And angers of the Gods for evil done  
 And expiation lack'd — no power on  
 Fate  
 Theirs, or mine own! for when the  
 crowd would roar  
 For blood, for war, whose issue was  
 their doom,  
 To cast wise words among the multi-  
 tude  
 Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in  
 hours  
 Of civil outbreak, when I knew the  
 twain  
 Would each waste each, and bring on  
 both the yoke  
 Of stronger states, was mine the voice  
 to curb  
 The madness of our cities and their  
 kings.

Who ever turn'd upon his heel to  
 hear  
 My warning that the tyranny of one  
 Was prelude to the tyranny of all?  
 My counsel that the tyranny of all  
 Led backward to the tyranny of one?

This power hath work'd no good to  
 aught that lives,  
 And these blind hands were useless in  
 their wars.  
 O, therefore, that the unfulfill'd de-  
 sire,

The grief for ever born from griefs to  
 be,  
 The boundless yearning of the pro-  
 phet's heart — 80  
 Could *that* stand forth, and like a  
 statue, rear'd  
 To some great citizen, win all praise  
 from all

Who past it, saying, 'That was he!'  
 In vain!

Virtue must shape itself in deed, and  
 those  
 Whom weakness or necessity have  
 cramp'd  
 Within themselves, immersing, each,  
 his urn

In his own well, draws solace as he  
 may.

Menceceus, thou hast eyes, and I can  
 hear

Too plainly what full tides of onset sap

Our seven high gates, and what a  
 weight of war<sup>90</sup>  
 Rides on those ringing axles ! jingle  
 of bits,  
 Shouts, arrows, tramp of the horn-  
 footed horse  
 That grind the glebe to powder ! Stony  
 showers  
 Of that ear-stunning hail of Arès crash  
 Along the sounding walls. Above, be-  
 low,  
 Shock after shock, the song-built  
 towers and gates  
 Reel, bruised and butted with, the  
 shuddering  
 War-thunder of iron rams ; and from  
 within  
 The city comes a murmur void of joy,  
 Lest she be taken captive — maidens,  
 wives,<sup>100</sup>  
 And mothers with their babblers of  
 the dawn,  
 And oldest age in shadow from the  
 night,  
 Falling about their shrines before their  
 Gods,  
 And wailing, ' Save us.'  
 And they wail to thee !  
 These eyeless eyes, that cannot see  
 thine own,  
 See this, that only in thy virtue lies  
 The saving of our Thebes ; for, yes-  
 ternight,  
 To me, the great God Arès, whose one  
 bliss  
 Is war and human sacrifice — himself  
 Blood-red from battle, spear and hel-  
 met tipt<sup>110</sup>  
 With stormy light as on a mast at  
 sea,  
 Stood out before a darkness, crying,  
 ' Thebes,  
 Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I  
 loathe  
 The seed of Cadmus — yet if one of  
 these  
 By his own hand — if one of these —'  
 My son,  
 No sound is breathed so potent to co-  
 erce,  
 And to conciliate, as their names who  
 dare  
 For that sweet mother land which  
 gave them birth  
 Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their  
 names,

Graven on memorial columns, are a  
 song<sup>120</sup>  
 Heard in the future ; few, but more  
 than wall  
 And rampart, their examples reach a  
 hand  
 Far thro' all years, and everywhere  
 they meet  
 And kindle generous purpose, and the  
 strength  
 To mould it into action pure as theirs.  
 Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's  
 best end  
 Be to end well ! and thou refusing  
 this,  
 Unvenerable will thy memory be  
 While men shall move the lips ; but if  
 thou dare —  
 Thou, one of these, the race of Cad-  
 mus — then<sup>130</sup>  
 No stone is fitted in yon marble girth  
 Whose echo shall not tongue thy glo-  
 rious doom,  
 Nor in this pavement but shall ring  
 thy name  
 To every hoof that clangs it, and the  
 springs  
 Of Dirce laving yonder battle-plain,  
 Heard from the roofs by night, will  
 murmur thee  
 To thine own Thebes, while Thebes  
 thro' thee shall stand  
 Firm-based with all her Gods.  
 The Dragon's cave  
 Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing  
 vines —  
 Where once he dwelt and whence he  
 roll'd himself<sup>140</sup>  
 At dead of night — thou knowest, and  
 that smooth rock  
 Before it, altar - fashion'd, where of  
 late  
 The woman-breasted Sphinx, with  
 wings drawn back,  
 Folded her lion paws, and look'd to  
 Thebes.  
 There blanch the bones of whom she  
 slew, and these  
 Mixt with her own, because the fierce  
 beast found  
 A wiser than herself, and dash'd her-  
 self  
 Dead in her rage ; but thou art wise  
 enough,  
 Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt  
 the curse

Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the  
truth<sup>150</sup>  
Believe I speak it, let thine own hand  
strike  
Thy youthful pulses into rest and  
quench  
The red God's anger, fearing not to  
plunge  
Thy torch of life in darkness, rather  
—thou  
Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the  
stars  
Send no such light upon the ways of  
men  
As one great deed.

Thither, my son, and there  
Thou, that hast never known the em-  
brace of love,  
Offer thy maiden life.

This useless hand!  
I felt one warm tear fall upon it.  
Gone!<sup>160</sup>  
He will achieve his greatness.

But for me,  
I would that I were gather'd to my  
rest,  
And mingled with the famous kings  
of old,

On whom about their ocean-islets flash  
The faces of the Gods—the wise  
man's word,

Here trampled by the populace under-  
foot,

There crown'd with worship—and  
these eyes will find

The men I knew, and watch the char-  
iot whirl

About the goal again, and hunters  
race

The shadowy lion, and the warrior-  
kings,<sup>170</sup>

In height and prowess more than hu-  
man, strive

Again for glory, while the golden lyre  
Is ever sounding in heroic ears

Heroic hymns, and every way the  
vales

Wind, clouded with the grateful in-  
cense-fume

Of those who mix all odor to the Gods  
On one far height in one far-shining  
fire.

One height and one far-shining fire!  
And while I fancied that my friend

For this brief idyll would require<sup>180</sup>

A less diffuse and opulent end,  
And would defend his judgment well,  
If I should deem it over nice—

The tolling of his funeral bell  
Broke on my Pagan Paradise,  
And mixt the dream of classic times,  
And all the phantoms of the dream,  
With present grief, and made the  
rhymes,

That miss'd his living welcome, seem  
Like would-be guests an hour too late,  
Who down the highway moving  
on

With easy laughter find the gate<sup>190</sup>  
Is bolted, and the master gone.

Gone into darkness, that full light  
Of friendship! past, in sleep, away  
By night, into the deeper night!

The deeper night? A clearer day  
Than our poor twilight dawn on  
earth—

If night, what barren toil to be!  
What life, so main'd by night, were  
worth<sup>200</sup>

Our living out? Not mine to me  
Remembering all the golden hours  
Now silent, and so many dead,

And him the last; and laying flowers,  
This wreath, above his honor'd head,  
And praying that, when I from hence  
Shall fade with him into the un-  
known,

My close of earth's experience  
May prove as peaceful as his own.

## THE WRECK

## I

HIDE me, mother! my fathers be  
long'd to the church of old,

I am driven by storm and sin and  
death to the ancient fold,

I cling to the Catholic Cross once  
more, to the Faith that saves.

My brain is full of the crash of wrecks,  
and the roar of waves,

My life itself is a wreck, I have sul-  
lied a noble name,

I am flung from the rushing tide of  
the world as a waif of shame,

I am roused by the wail of a child,  
and awake to a livid light,

And a ghastlier face than ever has  
haunted a grave by night.

I would hide from the storm without,  
 I would flee from the storm  
 within,  
 I would make my life one prayer for  
 a soul that died in his sin, 10  
 I was the tempter, mother, and mine  
 was the deeper fall;  
 I will sit at your feet, I will hide my  
 face, I will tell you all.

## II

He that they gave me to, mother, a  
 heedless and innocent bride —  
 I never have wrong'd his heart, I  
 have only wounded his pride —  
 Spain in his blood and the Jew — dark-  
 visaged, stately and tall —  
 A princelier-looking man never slept  
 thro' a prince's hall.  
 And who, when his anger was kind-  
 led, would venture to give  
 him the nay?  
 And a man men fear is a man to be  
 loved by the women, they say.  
 And I could have loved him too, if the  
 blossom can dote on the blight,  
 Or the young green leaf rejoice in the  
 frost that sears it at night; 20  
 He would open the books that I prized,  
 and toss them away with a yawn,  
 Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the  
 which my nature was drawn,  
 The word of the Poet by whom the  
 deeps of the world are stirr'd,  
 The music that robs it in language  
 beneath and beyond the word!  
 My Shelley would fall from my hands  
 when he cast a contemptuous  
 glance  
 From where he was poring over his  
 Tables of Trade and Finance;  
 My hands, when I heard him coming,  
 would drop from the chords or  
 the keys,  
 But ever I fail'd to please him, how-  
 ever I strove to please —  
 All day long far-off in the cloud of the  
 city, and there 29  
 Lost, head and heart, in the chances  
 of dividend, consol, and share —  
 And at home if I sought for a kindly  
 caress, being woman and weak,  
 His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of  
 snow on the cheek.  
 And so, when I bore him a girl, when  
 I held it aloft in my joy,

He look'd at it coldly, and said to me,  
 'Pity it isn't a boy.'

The one thing given me, to love and  
 to live for, glanced at in scorn!  
 The child that I felt I could die for —  
 as if she were basely born!  
 I had lived a wild-flower life, I was  
 planted now in a tomb;  
 The daisy will shut to the shadow, I  
 closed my heart to the gloom;  
 I threw myself all abroad — I would  
 play my part with the young  
 By the low foot-lights of the world —  
 and I caught the wreath that  
 was flung. 40

## III

Mother, I have not — however their  
 tongues may have babbled of  
 me —  
 Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all  
 but a dwarf was he,  
 And all but a hunchback too; and I  
 look'd at him, first, askance,  
 With pity — not he the knight for an  
 amorous girl's romance!  
 Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd  
 in the light of a dowerless  
 smile,  
 Having lands at home and abroad in a  
 rich West-Indian isle;  
 But I came on him once at a ball, the  
 heart of a listening crowd —  
 Why, what a brow was there! he was  
 seated — speaking aloud  
 To women, the flower of the time, and  
 men at the helm of state —  
 Flowing with easy greatness and  
 touching on all things great, 50  
 Science, philosophy, song — till I felt  
 myself ready to weep  
 For I knew not what, when I heard  
 that voice, — as mellow and deep  
 As a psalm by a mighty master and  
 peal'd from an organ, — roll  
 Rising and falling — for, mother, the  
 voice was the voice of the soul;  
 And the sun of the soul made day in  
 the dark of his wonderful eyes.  
 Here was the hand that would help  
 me, would heal me — the heart  
 that was wise!  
 And he, poor man, when he learnt that  
 I hated the ring I wore,  
 He helpt me with death, and he heal'd  
 me with sorrow for evermore.

## IV

For I broke the bond. That day my  
 nurse had brought me the child.  
 The small sweet face was flush'd, but  
 it coo'd to the mother and  
 smiled.<sup>60</sup>  
 'Anything ailing,' I ask'd her, 'with  
 baby?' She shook her head,  
 And the motherless mother kiss'd it,  
 and turn'd in her haste and fled.

## V

Low warm winds had gently breathed  
 us away from the land —  
 Ten long sweet summer days upon  
 deck, sitting hand in hand —  
 When he clothed a naked mind with  
 the wisdom and wealth of his  
 own,  
 And I bow'd myself down as a slave  
 to his intellectual throne,  
 When he coin'd into English gold  
 some treasure of classical song,  
 When he flouted a statesman's error,  
 or flamed at a public wrong,  
 When he rose as it were on the wings  
 of an eagle beyond me, and  
 past  
 Over the range and the change of the  
 world from the first to the  
 last,<sup>70</sup>  
 When he spoke of his tropical home in  
 the canes by the purple tide,  
 And the high star-crowns of his palms  
 on the deep-wooded mountain-  
 side,  
 And cliffs all robed in lianas that  
 dropt to the brink of his bay,  
 And trees like the towers of a minster,  
 the sons of a winterless day.  
 'Paradise there!' so he said, but I  
 seem'd in Paradise then  
 With the first great love I had felt for  
 the first and greatest of men;  
 Ten long days of summer and sin — if  
 it must be so —  
 But days of a larger light than I ever  
 again shall know —  
 Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro'  
 life to my latest breath;  
 'No frost there,' so he said, 'as in true-  
 est love no death.'<sup>80</sup>

## VI

Mother, one morning a bird with a  
 warble plaintively sweet

Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell  
 fluttering down at my feet;  
 I took it, he made it a cage, we  
 fondled it, Stephen and I,  
 But it died, and I thought of the child  
 for a moment, I scarce know  
 why.

## VII

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as  
 many will say,  
 My sin to my desolate little one found  
 me at sea on a day,  
 When her orphan wail came borne in  
 the shriek of a growing wind,  
 And a voice rang out in the thunders  
 of ocean and heaven, 'Thou  
 hast sinn'd.'  
 And down in the cabin were we, for  
 the towering crest of the tides  
 Plunged on the vessel and swept in a  
 cataract off from her sides,<sup>90</sup>  
 And ever the great storm grew with a  
 howl and a hoot of the blast  
 In the rigging, voices of hell — then  
 came the crash of the mast.  
 'The wages of sin is death,' and there  
 I began to weep,  
 'I am the Jonah, the crew should cast  
 me into the deep,  
 For, ah, God! what a heart was mine  
 to forsake her even for you!'  
 'Never the heart among women,' he  
 said, 'more tender and true.'  
 'The heart! not a mother's heart,  
 when I left my darling alone.'  
 'Comfort yourself, for the heart of  
 the father will care for his own.'  
 'The heart of the father will spurn  
 her,' I cried, 'for the sin of the  
 wife,  
 The cloud of the mother's shame will  
 enfold her and darken her  
 life.'<sup>100</sup>  
 Then his pale face twitch'd. 'O Ste-  
 phen, I love you, I love you,  
 and yet' —  
 As I lean'd away from his arms —  
 'would God, we had never met!'  
 And he spoke not — only the storm;  
 till after a little, I yearn'd  
 For his voice again, and he call'd to  
 me, 'Kiss me!' and there — as  
 I turn'd —  
 'The heart, the heart!' I kiss'd him,  
 I clung to the sinking form,

And the storm went roaring above us,  
and he — was out of the storm.

## VIII

And then, then, mother, the ship stagger'd under a thunderous shock,  
That shook us asunder, as if she had struck and crash'd on a rock;  
For a huge sea smote every soul from the decks of the Falcon but one;  
All of them, all but the man that was lash'd to the helm had gone; <sup>110</sup>  
And I fell — and the storm and the days went by, but I knew no more —

Lost myself — lay like the dead by the dead on the cabin floor,  
Dead to the death beside me, and lost to the loss that was mine,  
With a dim dream, now and then, of a hand giving bread and wine,  
Till I woke from the trance, and the ship stood still, and the skies were blue,  
But the face I had known, O mother, was not the face that I knew.

## IX

The strange misfeaturing mask that I saw so amazed me that I  
Stumbled on deck, half mad. I would fling myself over and die!  
But one — he was waving a flag — the one man left on the wreck —  
'Woman,' — he graspt at my arm, — 'stay there!' — I crouch'd upon deck — <sup>120</sup>  
'We are sinking, and yet there's hope: look yonder,' he cried, 'a sail!'  
In a tone so rough that I broke into passionate tears, and the wail  
Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat was nearing us — then  
All on a sudden I thought, I shall look on the child again.

## X

They lower'd me down the side, and there in the boat I lay  
With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-home, as we glided away,  
And I sigh'd as the low dark hull dipt under the smiling main.  
'Had I stay'd with him, I had now — with him — been out of my pain.'

## XI

They took us aboard. The crew were gentle, the captain kind,  
But I was the lonely slave of an often-wandering mind;  
For whenever a rougher gust might tumble a stormier wave,  
'O Stephen,' I moan'd, 'I am coming to thee in thine ocean-grave.'  
And again, when a balmier breeze curl'd over a peacefuller sea,  
I found myself moaning again, 'O child, I am coming to thee.'

## XII

The broad white brow of the isle — that bay with the color'd sand —  
Rich was the rose of sunset there, as we drew to the land;  
All so quiet the ripple would hardly blanch into spray  
At the feet of the cliff; and I pray'd — 'My child,' — for I still could pray, —  
'May her life be as blissfully calm, be never gloom'd by the curse <sup>130</sup>  
Of a sin, not hers!'  
Was it well with the child?

I wrote to the nurse  
Who had borne my flower on her hireling heart; and an answer came  
Not from the nurse — nor yet to the wife — to her maiden name!  
I shook as I open'd the letter — I knew that hand too well —  
And from it a scrap, clipt out of the 'deaths' in a paper, fell.  
'Ten long sweet summer days' of fever, and want of care!  
And gone — that day of the storm — O mother, she came to me there!

## DESPAIR

## I

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel there looking over the sand?  
Follow'd us too that night, and dogg'd us, and drew me to land?

## II

What did I feel that night? You are curious. How should I tell?  
Does it matter so much what I felt?

You rescued me — yet — was it well  
 That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd,  
 between me and the deep and  
 my doom,  
 Three days since, three more dark days  
 of the Godless gloom  
 Of a life without sun, without health,  
 without hope, without any de-  
 light  
 In anything here upon earth ? but, ah,  
 God ! that night, that night  
 When the rolling eyes of the light-  
 house there on the fatal neck  
 Of land running out into rock — they  
 had saved many hundreds from  
 wreck —  
 Glared on our way toward death, I  
 remember I thought, as we past,  
 Does it matter how many they saved ?  
 we are all of us wreck'd at  
 last —  
 'Do you fear ?' and there came thro'  
 the roar of the breaker a whis-  
 per, a breath,

'Fear ? am I not with you ? I am  
 frightened at life, not death.'

## III

And the suns of the limitless universe  
 sparkled and shone in the sky,  
 Flashing with fires as of God, but we  
 knew that their light was a lie —  
 Bright as with deathless hope — but,  
 however they sparkled and  
 shone,  
 The dark little worlds running round  
 them were worlds of woe like  
 our own —  
 No soul in the heaven above, no soul  
 on the earth below,  
 A fiery scroll written over with lamen-  
 tation and woe.

## IV

See, we were nursed in the drear  
 nightfold of your fatalist creed,  
 And we turn'd to the growing dawn,  
 we had hoped for a dawn in-  
 deed,



'The lost sea-home'



When the light of a sun that was coming  
would scatter the ghosts of  
the past,  
And the cramping creeds that had  
madden'd the peoples would  
vanish at last,  
And we broke away from the Christ,  
our human brother and friend,  
For He spoke, or it seem'd that He  
spoke, of a hell without help,  
without end.

## V

Hoped for a dawn, and it came, but  
the promise had faded away ;  
We had past from a cheerless night to  
the glare of a drearier day ;  
He is only a cloud and a smoke who  
was once a pillar of fire,  
The guess of a worm in the dust and  
the shadow of its desire — 30  
Of a worm as it writhes in a world of  
the weak trodden down by the  
strong,  
Of a dying worm in a world, all mas-  
sacre, murder, and wrong.

## VI

O, we poor orphans of nothing —  
alone on that lonely shore —  
Born of the brainless Nature who knew  
not that which she bore !  
Trusting no longer that earthly flower  
would be heavenly fruit —  
Come from the brute, poor souls — no  
souls — and to die with the  
brute —

## VII

Nay, but I am not claiming your pity ;  
I know you of old —  
Small pity for those that have ranged  
from the narrow warmth of  
your fold,  
Where you baw'd the dark side of  
your faith and a God of eternal  
rage,  
Till you flung us back on ourselves,  
and the human heart, and the  
Age. 40

## VIII

But pity — the Pagan held it a vice  
— was in her and in me,  
Helpless, taking the place of the pity-  
ing God that should be !

Pity for all that aches in the grasp of  
an idiot power,  
And pity for our own selves on an  
earth that bore not a flower ;  
Pity for all that suffers on land or in  
air or the deep,  
And pity for our own selves till we  
long'd for eternal sleep.

## IX

'Lightly step over the sands ! the  
waters — you hear them call !  
Life with its anguish, and horrors, and  
errors — away with it all !'  
And she laid her hand in my own —  
she was always loyal and  
sweet —  
Till the points of the foam in the  
dusk came playing about our  
feet. 50  
*There* was a strong sea-current would  
sweep us out to the main.  
'Ah, God !' tho' I felt as I spoke I  
was taking the name in vain —  
'Ah, God !' and we turn'd to each  
other, we kiss'd, we embraced,  
she and I,  
Knowing the love we were used to be-  
lieve everlasting would die.  
We had read their know-nothing  
books, and we lean'd to the  
darker side —  
Ah, God, should we find Him, per-  
haps, perhaps, if we died, if we  
died ;  
We never had found Him on earth,  
this earth is a fatherless hell —  
'Dear love, for ever and ever, for  
ever and ever farewell !'  
Never a cry so desolate, not since the  
world began,  
Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the  
coming of man ! 60

## X

But the blind wave cast me ashore,  
and you saved me, a valueless  
life.  
Not a grain of gratitude mine ! You  
have parted the man from the  
wife.  
I am left alone on the land, she is all  
alone in the sea ;  
If a curse meant aught, I would  
curse you for not having let  
me be.

## XI

Visions of youth—for my brain was  
drunk with the water, it seems;  
I had past into perfect quiet at length  
out of pleasant dreams,  
And the transient trouble of drown-  
ing—what was it when match'd  
with the pains  
Of the hellish heat of a wretched life  
rushing back thro' the veins?

## XII

Why should I live? one son had  
forged on his father and fled,  
And if I believed in a God, I would  
thank Him, the other is dead, <sup>70</sup>  
And there was a baby-girl, that had  
never look'd on the light;  
Happiest she of us all, for she past  
from the night to the night.

## XIII

But the crime, if a crime, of her  
eldest-born, her glory, her  
boast,  
Struck hard at the tender heart of the  
mother, and broke it almost;  
Tho', glory and shame dying out for  
ever in endless time,  
Does it matter so much whether  
crown'd for a virtue, or hang'd  
for a crime?

## XIV

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood  
there, naked, amazed  
In a world of arrogant opulence, fear'd  
myself turning crazed,  
And I would not be mock'd in a mad-  
house! and she, the delicate  
wife,  
With a grief that could only be cured,  
if cured, by the surgeon's  
knife, — <sup>80</sup>

## XV

Why should we bear with an hour of  
torture, a moment of pain,  
If every man die for ever, if all his  
griefs are in vain,  
And the homeless planet at length will  
be wheel'd thro' the silence of  
space,  
Motherless evermore of an ever-vanish-  
ing race,  
When the worm shall have writhed its

last, and its last brother-worm  
will have fled  
From the dead fossil skull that is left  
in the rocks of an earth that is  
dead?

## XVI

Have I crazed myself over their hor-  
rible infidel writings? O, yes,  
For these are the new dark ages, you  
see, of the popular press,  
When the bat comes out of his cave,  
and the owls are whooping at  
noon,  
And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill  
and crows to the sun and the  
moon, <sup>90</sup>  
Till the sun and the moon of our sci-  
ence are both of them turn'd  
into blood,  
And Hope will have broken her heart,  
running after a shadow of good;  
For their knowing and know-nothing  
books are scatter'd from hand to  
hand—  
We have knelt in your know-all chal-  
pel too, looking over the sand.

## XVII

What! I should call on that Infinite  
Love that has served us so well?  
Infinite cruelty rather that made ever-  
lasting hell,  
Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us,  
and does what he will with his  
own;  
Better our dead brute mother who  
never has heard us groan!

## XVIII

Hell? if the souls of men were immor-  
tal, as men have been told,  
The lecher would cleave to his lusts,  
and the miser would yearn for  
his gold, <sup>100</sup>  
And so there were hell for ever! but  
were there a God, as you say,  
His love would have power over hell  
till it utterly vanish'd away.

## XIX

Ah, yet—I have had some glimmer,  
at times, in my gloomiest woe,  
Of a God behind all—after all—the  
great God, for aught that I  
know;

But the God of love and of hell  
together — they cannot be  
thought,  
If there be such a God, may the Great  
God curse him and bring him to  
nought !

## xx

Blasphemy ! whose is the fault ? is it  
mine ? for why would you save  
A madman to vex you with wretched  
words, who is best in his grave ?  
Blasphemy ! ay, why not, being  
damn'd beyond hope of grace ?  
O, would I were yonder with her, and  
away from your faith and your  
face !

110

Blasphemy ! true ! I have scared you  
pale with my scandalous talk,  
But the blasphemy to *my* mind lies all  
in the way that you walk.

## xxi

Hence ! she is gone ! can I stay ? can  
I breathe divorced from the  
past ?  
You needs must have good lynx-eyes  
if I do not escape you at last.  
Our orthodox coroner doubtless will  
find it a *felo-de-se*,  
And the stake and the cross-road, fool,  
if you will, does it matter to  
me ?

## THE ANCIENT SAGE

A THOUSAND summers ere the time of  
Christ,  
From out his ancient city came a Seer  
Whom one that loved and honor'd  
him, and yet  
Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but  
worn  
From wasteful living, follow'd — in  
his hand  
A scroll of verse — till that old man  
before  
A cavern whence an affluent fountain  
pour'd  
From darkness into daylight, turn'd  
and spoke :

'This wealth of waters might but  
seem to draw  
From yon dark cave, but, son, the  
source is higher,

10

Yon summit half-a-league in air — and  
higher  
The cloud that hides it — higher still  
the heavens  
Whereby the cloud was moulded, and  
whereout  
The cloud descended. Force is from  
the heights.  
I am wearied of our city, son, and go  
To spend my one last year among the  
hills.  
What hast thou there ? Some death-  
song for the Ghouls  
To make their banquet relish ? let me  
read.

"How far thro' all the bloom and brake  
That nightingale is heard !  
What power but the bird's could make  
This music in the bird ?  
How summer-bright are yonder skies,  
And earth as fair in hue !  
And yet what sign of aught that lies  
Behind the green and blue ?  
But man to-day is fancy's fool  
As man hath ever been.  
The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule  
Were never heard or seen."

30

If thou wouldst hear the Nameless,  
and wilt dive  
Into the temple-cave of thine own self,  
There, brooding by the central altar,  
thou  
Mayst haply learn the Nameless hath  
a voice,  
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be  
wise,  
As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst  
not know ;  
For Knowledge is the swallow on the  
lake  
That sees and stirs the surface-shadow  
there  
But never yet hath dipt into the  
abysm,  
The abysm of all abysms, beneath,  
within  
The blue of sky and sea, the green of  
earth,  
And in the million-millionth of a grain  
Which cleft and cleft again for ever-  
more,  
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,  
To me, my son, more mystic than my  
self,  
Or even than the Nameless is to me.

'And when thou sendest thy free  
soul thro' heaven,  
Nor understandest bound nor bound-  
lessness,  
Thou seest the Nameless of the hun-  
dred names.

'And if the Nameless should with-  
draw from all 50  
Thy frailty counts most real, all thy  
world  
Might vanish like thy shadow in the  
dark.

"And since — from when this earth be-  
gan —  
The Nameless never came  
Among us, never spake with man,  
And never named the Name" —

Thou canst not prove the Nameless,  
O my son,  
Nor canst thou prove the world thou  
movest in,  
Thou canst not prove that thou art  
body alone,  
Nor canst thou prove that thou art  
spirit alone, 60  
Nor canst thou prove that thou art  
both in one.  
Thou canst not prove thou art im-  
mortal, no,  
Nor yet that thou art mortal — nay,  
my son,  
Thou canst not prove that I, who  
speak with thee,  
Am not thyself in converse with thy-  
self,  
For nothing worthy proving can be  
proven,  
Nor yet disproven. Wherefore thou  
be wise,  
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of  
doubt,  
And cling to Faith beyond the forms  
of Faith!  
She reels not in the storm of warring  
words, 70  
She brightens at the clash of "Yes"  
and "No,"  
She sees the best that glimmers thro'  
the worst,  
She feels the sun is hid but for a night,  
She spies the summer thro' the winter  
bud,  
She tastes the fruit before the blossom  
falls,

She hears the lark within the songless  
egg,  
She finds the fountain where they  
wait'd "Mirage!"

"What Power? aught akin to Mind,  
The mind in me and you?  
Or power as of the Gods gone blind 80  
Who see not what they do?"

But some in yonder city hold, my  
son,  
That none but gods could build this  
house of ours,  
So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond  
All work of man, yet, like all work  
of man,  
A beauty with defect — till That which  
knows,  
And is not known, but felt thro' what  
we feel  
Within ourselves is highest, shall de-  
scend  
On this half-deed, and shape it at the  
last  
According to the Highest in the High-  
est. 90

"What Power but the Years that make  
And break the vase of clay,  
And stir the sleeping earth, and wake  
The bloom that fades away?  
What rulers but the Days and Hours  
That cancel weal with woe,  
And wind the front of youth with flowers,  
And cap our age with snow?"

The days and hours are ever glancing  
by,  
And seem to flicker past thro' sun  
and shade, 100  
Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads,  
or Pain,  
But with the Nameless is nor day nor  
hour;  
Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from  
thought to thought,  
Break into "Thens" and "Whens"  
the Eternal Now —  
This double seeming of the single  
world! —  
My words are like the babblings in a  
dream  
Of nightmare, when the babblings  
break the dream.  
But thou be wise in this dream-world  
of ours, .

Nor take thy dial for thy deity,  
But make the passing shadow serve  
thy will. 110

"The years that made the stripling wise  
Undo their work again,  
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,  
The last and least of men;  
Who clings to earth, and once would dare  
Hell-heat or Arctic cold,  
And now one breath of cooler air  
Would loose him from his hold.  
His winter chills him to the root,  
He withers marrow and mind; 120  
The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit  
Is jutting thro' the rind;  
The tiger spasms tear his chest,  
The palsy wags his head;  
The wife, the sons, who love him best  
Would fain that he were dead;  
The griefs by which he once was wrung  
Were never worth the while" —

Who knows? or whether this earth-  
narrow life  
Be yet but yolk, and forming in the  
shell? 130

"The shaft of scorn that once had stung  
But wakes a dotard smile."

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

"The statesman's brain that sway'd the  
past  
Is feebler than his knees;  
The passive sailor wrecks at last  
In ever-silent seas;  
The warrior hath forgot his arms,  
The learned all his lore;  
The changing market frets or charms 140  
The merchant's hope no more:  
The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,  
And now is lost in cloud;  
The plowman passes, bent with pain,  
To mix with what he plow'd;  
The poet whom his age would quote  
As heir of endless fame —  
He knows not even the book he wrote,  
Not even his own name.  
For man has overlived his day, 150  
And, darkening in the light,  
Scarce feels the senses break away  
To mix with ancient Night."

The shell must break before the bird  
can fly.

"The years that when my youth began  
Had set the lily and rose  
By all my ways where'er they ran,  
Have ended mortal foes;

My rose of love for ever gone,  
My lily of truth and trust — 160  
They made her lily and rose in one,  
And changed her into dust.  
O rose-tree planted in my grief,  
And growing on her tomb,  
Her dust is greening in your leaf,  
Her blood is in your bloom.  
O slender lily waving there,  
And laughing back the light,  
In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'  
When all is dark as night." 170

My son, the world is dark with griefs  
and graves,  
So dark that men cry out against the  
heavens.  
Who knows but that the darkness is  
in man?  
The doors of Night may be the gates  
of Light;  
For wert thou born or blind or deaf,  
and then  
Suddenly heal'd, how wouldst thou  
glory in all  
The splendors and the voices of the  
world!  
And we, the poor earth's dying race,  
and yet  
No phantoms, watching from a phan-  
tom shore  
Await the last and largest sense to  
make 180  
The phantom walls of this illusion  
fade,  
And show us that the world is wholly  
fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd years  
As laughter over wine,  
And vain the laughter as the tears,  
O brother, mine or thine,  
For all that laugh, and all that weep  
And all that breathe are one  
Slight ripple on the boundless deep  
That moves, and all is gone." 190

But that one ripple on the boundless  
deep  
Feels that the deep is boundless, and  
itself  
For ever changing form, but evermore  
One with the boundless motion of the  
deep.

"Yet wine and laughter, friends! and set  
The lamps alight, and call  
For golden music, and forget  
The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day, my son —  
 But earth's dark forehead flings  
 athwart the heavens <sup>200</sup>  
 Her shadow crown'd with stars — and  
 yonder — out  
 To northward — some that never set,  
 but pass  
 From sight and night to lose them-  
 selves in day.  
 I hate the black negation of the bier,  
 And wish the dead, as happier than  
 ourselves  
 And higher, having climb'd one step  
 beyond  
 Our village miseries, might be borne  
 in white  
 To burial or to burning, hymn'd from  
 hence  
 With songs in praise of death, and  
 crown'd with flowers!

“ O worms and maggots of to-day <sup>210</sup>  
 Without their hope of wings!”

But louder than thy rhyme the silent  
 Word  
 Of that world-prophet in the heart of  
 man.

“ Tho' some have gleams, or so they say,  
 Of more than mortal things.”

To-day? but what of yesterday? for  
 oft  
 On me, when boy, there came what  
 then I call'd,  
 Who knew no books and no philoso-  
 phies,  
 In my boy-phrase, “ The Passion of  
 the Past.”  
 The first gray streak of earliest sum-  
 mer-dawn, <sup>220</sup>  
 The last long strife of waning crimson  
 gloom,  
 As if the late and early were but one —  
 A height, a broken grange, a grove,  
 a flower  
 Had murmurs, “ Lost and gone, and  
 lost and gone!”  
 A breath, a whisper — some divine  
 farewell —  
 Desolate sweetness — far and far  
 away —  
 What had he loved, what had he lost,  
 the boy?

I know not, and I speak of what has  
 been.

‘ And more, my son! for more than  
 once when I  
 Sat all alone, revolving in myself <sup>230</sup>  
 The word that is the symbol of my-  
 self,  
 The mortal limit of the Self was  
 loosed,  
 And past into the Nameless, as a cloud  
 Melts into heaven. I touch'd my  
 limbs, the limbs  
 Were strange, not mine — and yet no  
 shade of doubt,  
 But utter clearness, and thro' loss of  
 self  
 The gain of such large life as match'd  
 with ours  
 Were sun to spark — unshadowable in  
 words,  
 Themselves but shadows of a shadow-  
 world.

“ And idle gleams will come and go, <sup>240</sup>  
 But still the clouds remain;”

The clouds themselves are children of  
 the Sun,

“ And Night and Shadow rule below  
 When only Day should reign.”

And Day and Night are children of  
 the Sun.  
 And idle gleams to thee are light to  
 me.  
 Some say, the Light was father of the  
 Night,  
 And some, the Night was father of  
 the Light,  
 No night, no day! — I touch thy  
 world again —  
 No ill, no good! — such counter-terms,  
 my son, <sup>250</sup>  
 Are border-races, holding each its  
 own  
 By endless war. But night enough  
 is there  
 In yon dark city. Get thee back; and  
 since  
 The key to that weird casket, which  
 for thee  
 But holds a skull, is neither thine nor  
 mine,  
 But in the hand of what is more than  
 man,

Or in man's hand when man is more  
 than man,  
 Let be thy wail, and help thy fellow-  
 men,  
 And make thy gold thy vassal, not  
 thy king,  
 And fling free alms into the beggar's  
 bowl,  
 And send the day into the darken'd  
 heart;  
 Nor list for guerdon in the voice of  
 men,  
 A dying echo from a falling wall;  
 Nor care — for Hunger hath the evil  
 eye  
 To vex the noon with fiery gems, or  
 fold  
 Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous  
 looms;  
 Nor roll thy viands on a luscious  
 tongue,  
 Nor drown thyself with flies in hon-  
 eyed wine;  
 Nor thou be rageful, like a handled  
 bee,  
 And lose thy life by usage of thy  
 sting;  
 Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for  
 harm,  
 Nor make a snail's horn shrink for  
 wantonness.  
 And more — think well ! Do-well will  
 follow thought,  
 And in the fatal sequence of this  
 world  
 An evil thought may soil thy children's  
 blood;  
 But curb the beast would cast thee in  
 the mire,  
 And leave the hot swamp of voluptu-  
 ousness,  
 A cloud between the Nameless and  
 thyself,  
 And lay thine uphill shoulder to the  
 wheel,  
 And climb the Mount of Blessing,  
 whence, if thou  
 Look higher, then — perchance — thou  
 mayest — beyond  
 A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,  
 And past the range of Night and  
 Shadow — see  
 The high-heaven dawn of more than  
 mortal day  
 Strike on the Mount of Vision !  
 So, farewell.'

## THE FLIGHT

## I

ARE you sleeping ? have you forgot-  
 ten ? do not sleep, my sister  
 dear !  
 How *can* you sleep ? the morning  
 brings the day I hate and fear ;  
 The cock has crow'd already once, he  
 crows before his time ;  
 Awake ! the creeping glimmer steals,  
 the hills are white with rime.

## II

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah,  
 fold me to your breast !  
 Ah, let me weep my fill once more,  
 and cry myself to rest !  
 To rest ? to rest and wake no more  
 were better rest for me,  
 Than to waken every morning to that  
 face I loathe to see.

## III

I envied your sweet slumber, all night  
 so calm you lay ;  
 The night was calm, the morn is calm,  
 and like another day ;  
 But I could wish yon moaning sea  
 would rise and burst the shore,  
 And such a whirlwind blow these  
 woods as never blew before.

## IV

For, one by one, the stars went down  
 across the gleaming pane,  
 And project after project rose, and all  
 of them were vain ;  
 The blackthorn-blossom fades and falls  
 and leaves the bitter sloe,  
 The hope I catch at vanishes, and  
 youth is turn'd to woe.

## V

Come, speak a little comfort ! all  
 night I pray'd with tears,  
 And yet no comfort came to me, and  
 now the morn appears,  
 When he will tear me from your side,  
 who bought me for his slave ;  
 This father pays his debt with me,  
 and weds me to my grave.

## VI

What father, this or mine, was he,  
 who, on that summer day

When I had fallen from off the crag  
 we clamber'd up in play,  
 Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd,  
 and took and kiss'd me, and  
 again  
 He kiss'd me; and I loved him then;  
 he *was* my father then.

## VII

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a  
 tyrant vice!  
 The goddess Jephtha vows his child  
 . . . to one cast of the dice.  
 These ancient woods, this Hall at  
 last will go — perhaps have  
 gone,  
 Except his own meek daughter yield  
 her life, heart, soul to one —

## VIII

To one who knows I scorn him. O,  
 the formal mocking bow,  
 The cruel smile, the courtly phrase  
 that masks his malice now — 30  
 But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam  
 of all things ill —  
 It is not Love but Hate that weds a  
 bride against her will;

## IX

Hate, that would pluck from this  
 true breast the locket that I  
 wear,  
 The precious crystal into which I  
 braided Edwin's hair!  
 The love that keeps this heart alive  
 beats on it night and day —  
 One golden curl, his golden gift, be-  
 fore he past away.

## X

He left us weeping in the woods; his  
 boat was on the sand;  
 How slowly down the rocks he went,  
 how loth to quit the land!  
 And all my life was darken'd, as I  
 saw the white sail run,  
 And darken, up that lane of light into  
 the setting sun. 40

## XI

How often have we watch'd the sun  
 fade from us thro' the West,  
 And follow Edwin to those isles, those  
 Islands of the Blest!

Is *he* not there? would I were there,  
 the friend, the bride, the wife,  
 With him, where summer never dies,  
 with Love, the sun of life!

## XII

O, would I were in Edwin's arms —  
 once more — to feel his breath  
 Upon my cheek — on Edwin's ship,  
 with Edwin, even in death,  
 Tho' all about the shuddering wreck  
 the death-white sea should rave,  
 Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows  
 of the wave!

## XIII

Shall I take *him*? I kneel with *him*?  
 I swear and swear forsworn  
 To love him most whom most I loathe,  
 to honor whom I scorn? 50  
 The Fiend would yell, the grave would  
 yawn, my mother's ghost would  
 rise —  
 To lie, to lie — in God's own house —  
 the blackest of all lies!

## XIV

Why — rather than that hand in mine,  
 tho' every pulse would freeze,  
 I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of  
 some foul disease.  
 Wed him? I will not wed him, let  
 them spurn me from the doors,  
 And I will wander till I die about the  
 barren moors.

## XV

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd  
 her bridegroom on her bridal  
 night —  
 If mad, then I am mad, but sane if she  
 were in the right.  
 My father's madness makes me mad —  
 but words are only words!  
 I am not mad, not yet, not quite —  
 There! listen how the birds 60

## XVI

Begin to warble yonder in the budding  
 orchard trees!  
 The lark has past from earth to heaven  
 upon the morning breeze!  
 How gladly, were I one of those, how  
 early would I wake!  
 And yet the sorrow that I bear is sor-  
 row for *his* sake.



## XVII

They love their mates, to whom they  
sing; or else their songs, that  
meet  
The morning with such music, would  
never be so sweet!  
And tho' these fathers will not hear,  
the blessed Heavens are just,  
And Love is fire, and burns the feet  
would trample it to dust.

## XVIII

A door was open'd in the house —  
who? who? my father sleeps!  
A stealthy foot upon the stair! he —  
some one — this way creeps!  
If he? yes, he — lurks, listens, fears  
his victim may have fled —  
He! where is some sharp-pointed  
thing? he comes, and finds me  
dead.

## XIX

Not he, not yet! and time to act —  
but how my temples burn!  
And idle fancies flutter me, I know  
not where to turn;  
Speak to me, sister, counsel me; this  
marriage must not be.  
You only know the love that makes  
the world a world to me!

## XX

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived —  
but we were left alone.  
That other left us to ourselves, he  
cared not for his own;  
So all the summer long we roam'd in  
these wild woods of ours,  
My Edwin loved to call us then 'his  
two wild woodland flowers.' so

## XXI

Wild flowers blowing side by side in  
God's free light and air.  
Wild flowers of the secret woods,  
when Edwin found us there,  
Wild woods in which we roved with  
him, and heard his passionate  
vow,  
Wild woods in which we rove no more,  
if we be parted now!

## XXII

You will not leave me thus in grief  
to wander forth forlorn;

We never changed a bitter word, not  
once since we were born;  
Our dying mother join'd our hands;  
she knew this father well;  
She bade us love, like souls in heaven,  
and now I fly from hell,

## XXIII

And you with me; and we shall light  
upon some lonely shore,  
Some lodge within the waste sea-dunes,  
and hear the waters roar,  
And see the ships from out the West  
go dipping thro' the foam,  
And sunshine on that sail at last which  
brings our Edwin home.

## XXIV

But look, the morning grows apace,  
and lights the old church-tower,  
And lights the clock! the hand points  
five — O, me! — it strikes the  
hour —  
I bide no more, I meet my fate, what-  
ever ills betide!  
Arise, my own true sister, come forth!  
the world is wide.

## XXV

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my  
eyes are dim with dew,  
I seem to see a new-dug grave up  
yonder by the yew!  
If we should never more return, but  
wander hand in hand  
With breaking hearts, without a  
friend, and in a distant land!

## XXVI

O sweet, they tell me that the world is  
hard, and harsh of mind,  
But can it be so hard, so harsh, as  
those that should be kind?  
That matters not. Let come what will;  
at last the end is sure,  
And every heart that loves with truth  
is equal to endure.

## TO-MORROW

## I

HER, that yer Honor was spakin' to?  
Whin, yer Honor? last year —  
Standin' here be the bridge, when last  
yer Honor was here?

An' yer Honor ye gev her the top of  
the mornin', 'To-morra,' says  
she.  
What did they call her, yer Honor?  
They call'd her Molly Magee.  
An' yer Honor's the thrue ould blood  
that always manes to be kind,  
But there's rason in all things, yer  
Honor, for Molly was out of her  
mind.

## II

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan night  
comin' down be the sthrame,  
An' it seems to me now like a bit of  
yistherday in a dhrame —  
Here where yer Honor seen her —  
there was but a slip of a moon,  
But I hard thim — Molly Magee wid  
her bachelor, Danny O'Roon —  
'You've been takin' a dhrop o' the  
crathur,' an' Danny says,  
'Troth, an' I been  
Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus  
O'Shea at Katty's shebeen;<sup>1</sup>  
But I must be lavin' ye soon.'  
'Ochone, are ye goin' away?'  
'Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate,'  
he says, 'over the say' —  
'An' whin will ye meet me agin?' an'  
I hard him, 'Molly asthore,  
I'll meet you agin to morra,' says he,  
'be the chapel-door.'  
'An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?'  
'O' Monday mornin', says he;  
'An' shure thin ye'll meet me to-  
morra?' 'To-morra, to-morra,  
machree!'  
Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honor,  
that had no likin' for Dan,  
Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to  
come away from the man,<sup>20</sup>  
An' Molly Magee kem flyin' acrass me,  
as light as a lark,  
An' Dan stood there for a minute, an'  
thin wint into the dark.  
But wirrah! the storm that night —  
the tundher, an' rain that fell,  
An' the sthrames runnin' down at the  
back o' the glin 'ud 'a dhrownded  
hell.

## III

But airth was at pace nixt mornin',  
an' hiven in its glory smiled,

<sup>1</sup> Grog-shop.

As the Holy Mother o' Glory that  
smiles at her sleepin' child —  
Ethen — she stept an the chapel-green  
an' she turn'd herself roun'  
Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for  
Danny was not to be foun',  
An' many's the time that I watch'd  
her at mass lettin' down the  
tear,  
For the devil a Danny was there, yer  
Honor, for forty year. <sup>30</sup>

## IV

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the  
rose an' the white o' the may,  
An' yer hair as black as the night, an'  
yer eyes as bright as the day!  
Achora, yer laste little whispser was  
sweet as the lilt of a bird!  
Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to  
music wid ivery word!  
An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre  
in sich an illigant han',  
An' the fall of yer foot in the dance  
was as light as snow an the lan',  
An' the sun kem out of a cloud whin-  
iver ye waltz in the shstreet,  
An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda,  
an' laid himself undher yer feet,  
An' I loved ye meself wid a heart an'  
a half, me darlin', and he  
'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a  
kiss of ye, Molly Magee. <sup>40</sup>

## V

But shure we wor betther frinds whin  
I crack'd his skull for her sake,  
An' he ped me back wid the best he  
could give at ould Donovan's  
wake —  
For the boys wor about her agin whin  
Dan did n't come to the fore,  
An' Shamus along wid the rest, but  
she put thim all to the door.  
An', after, I thried her meself av the  
bird 'ud come to me call.  
But Molly, begorrah, 'ud listhen to  
naither at all, at all.

## VI

An' her nabors an' frinds 'ud consowl  
an' condowl wid her, airly an'  
late,  
'Your Danny,' they says, 'niver crasst  
over say to the Sassenach  
whate;

He's gone to the States, aroon, an'  
 he's married another wife,  
 An' ye'll niver set eyes an' the face of  
 the thraithur agin in life! 50  
 An' to dhrame of a married man, death  
 alive, is a mortal sin.'  
 But Molly says, 'I'd his hand-pro-  
 mise, an' shure he'll meet me  
 agin.'

## VII

An' afther her paärints had inter'd  
 glory, an' both in wan day,  
 She began to spake to herself, the  
 crathur, an' whisper, an' say,  
 'To-morra, to-morra!' an' Father Mo-  
 lowny he tuk her in han',  
 'Molly, you're manin',' he says, 'me  
 dear, av I undherstan',  
 That ye'll meet your paärints agin  
 an' yer Danny O'Roon afore God  
 Wid his blessed Marthys an' Saints ;'  
 an' she gev him a frindly nod,  
 'To-morra, to-morra,' she says, an' she  
 did n't intind to desave,  
 But her wits wor dead, an' her hair  
 was as white as the snow an a  
 grave. 60

## VIII

Arrah now, here last month they wor  
 diggin' the bog, an' they foun'  
 Dhrownded in black bog-wather a corp  
 lyin' undher groun'.

## IX

Yer Honor's own agint, he says to me  
 wanst, at Katty's shebeen,  
 'The devil take all the black lan', for  
 a blessin' 'ud come wid the  
 green !'  
 An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut  
 his bit o' turf for the fire ?  
 But och ! bad scan to the bogs whin  
 they swallies the man intire !  
 An' sorra the bog that's in hiven wid  
 all the light an' the glow,  
 An' there's hate enough, shure, wid-  
 out *thim* in the devil's kitchen  
 below.

## X

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I  
 hard his Riverence say,  
 Could keep their haathen kings in the  
 flesh for the Jidgmint day, 70

An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they  
 kep' the cat an' the dog,  
 But it 'ud 'a been aisier work av they  
 lived be an Irish bog.

## XI

How-an-iver they laid this body they  
 foun' an the grass,  
 Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud  
 see it that wint in to mass —  
 But a frish generation had riz, an' most  
 of the ould was few,  
 An' I did n't know him meself, an'  
 none of the parish knew.

## XII

But Molly kem limp'in' up wid her  
 stick, — she was lamed iv a  
 knee, —  
 'Thin a slip of a goss<sup>hu</sup> call'd, 'Div  
 ye know him, <sup>ie</sup> <sup>ha</sup> Magee ?'  
 An' she stood up str<sup>it</sup> <sup>the</sup> queen of  
 the world — <sup>the</sup> lifted her  
 head —  
 'He said he would meet me to-morra !'  
 an' dhropt down dead an the  
 dead. 80

## XIII

Och, Molly, we thought, machree,  
 ye would start back agin into  
 life,  
 Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer  
 wake like husban' an' wife.  
 Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet  
 for the frinds that was gone !  
 Sorra the silent throat, but we hard it  
 cryin', 'Ochone !'  
 An' Shamus O'Shea that has now ten  
 childer, handsome an' tall,  
 Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if  
 he had lost thim all.

## XIV

Thin his Riverence buried thim both  
 in wan grave be the dead boor-  
 tree, <sup>1</sup>  
 The young man Danny O'Roon wid  
 his ould woman, Molly Magee.

## XV

May all the flowers o' Jerooslim blos-  
 som an' spring from the grass,  
 Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other — as  
 ye did — over yer Crass ! 90

<sup>1</sup> Elder-tree.

An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid  
his song to the sun an' the moon,  
An' tell thim in hiven about Molly  
Magee an' her Danny O'Roon,  
Till Holy Saint Pether gets up wid his  
kays an' opens the gate!  
An' shure, be the Crass, that's betther  
nor cuttin' the Sassenach whate,  
To be there wid the Blessed Mother  
an' Saints an' Marthyrs galore,  
An' singin' yer 'Aves' an' 'Pathers'  
for iver an' ivermore.

## XVI

An' now that I tould yer Honor what-  
iver I hard an' seen,  
Yer Honor 'ill give me a thrifle to  
dhrink yer health in potheen.

## THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS

## I

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess! fur it  
mun be the time about now  
When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end  
close wi' her paßils fro' the cow.  
Eh! tha be new to the plaáce—  
thou'rt gaäpin'—does'n't tha  
see  
I calls 'em arter the fellers es once  
was sweet upo' me?

## II

Naäy, to be sewer, it be past 'er time.  
What maäkes 'er sa laäte?  
Goß to the laäne at the back, an'  
looök thruf Maddison's gaäte!

## III

Sweet-arts! Molly belike may 'a  
lighted to-night upo' one.  
Sweet-arts! thanks to the Lord that I  
niver not listen'd to noän!  
So I sits i' my oän armchair wi' my  
oän kettle theere o' the hob,  
An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the  
second, an' Steevie an' Rob. 10

## IV

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou  
sees that i' spite o' the men  
I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two  
'oonderd a-year to mysen;  
Yis! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es  
ony lass i' the Shere;

An' thou be es pretty a tabby, but  
Robby I seed thruf ya theere.

## V

Feyther 'ud saäy I wur ugly es sin,  
an' I beänt not vaäin,  
But I niver wur downright hugly,  
thaw soom 'ud 'a thowt ma  
plaäin,  
An' I was n't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons  
— ye said I wur pretty i' pinks,  
An' I liked to 'ear i' I did, but I beänt  
sich a fool as ye thinks;  
Ye was stroäkin' ma down wi' the 'air,  
as I be a-stroäkin' o' you,  
But whiniver I looöked i' the glass I  
wur sewer that it could n't be  
true;  
Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye  
knew'd it wur pleasant to 'ear,  
Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty,  
but my two 'oonderd a-year.

## VI

D' ya mind the murnin' when we was  
a-walkin' together, an' stood  
By the claäy'd-ooop pond, that the  
foälk be sa scared at, i' Gig-  
glesby wood,  
Wheer the poor wench drowndid her-  
sen, black Sal, es 'ed been dis-  
graäced?  
An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur  
a-creeäpin' about my waäist;  
An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's  
gittin' ower fond,  
I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt  
foot fust i' the pond;  
And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa  
well, as I did that daäy,  
Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha  
hoickt my feet wi' a flop fro'  
the claäy.  
Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop  
thy taäil, tha may gie ma a kiss,  
Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoüm  
an' wur niver sa nigh saäyin'  
Yis.  
But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we  
was shaämed to cross Gigglesby  
Greeän,  
Fur a cat may looök at a king, thou  
knavs, but the cat mun be  
cleän.  
Sa we boäth on us kep' out o' sight o'  
the winders o' Gigglesby Hinn—

Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet!  
they pricks cleän thruf to the  
skin—

An' wa boäth slinkt 'oäm by the brok-  
ken shed i' the laäne at the  
back,

Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha once,  
an' thou runn'd oop o' the thack;  
An' tha squeedg'd my'and i' the shed,  
fur theree we was forced to  
'ide,

Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin',  
and one o' the Tommies beside.

## VII

Theree now, what art 'a mewin' at,  
Steevie? for ow't I can tell— 41  
Robby wur fust, to be sewer, or I  
mowt 'a liked tha as well.

## VIII

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the  
while I wur chaängin' my gown,  
An' I thowt, shall I chaänge my  
staäte? but, O Lord, upo'  
coomin' down—

My bran-new carpet es fresh es a  
midder o' flowers i' Maäy—

Why 'ed n't tha wiped thy shoes? it  
wur clatted all ower wi' cläy.

An' I could 'a cried ammost, fur I  
seed that it could n't be,

An', Robby, I gied tha a raätin' that  
sattled thy coortin' o' me.

An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we  
was a-cleänin' the floor,

That a man be a durty thing an' a  
trouble an' plague wi' indoor. 50

But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck  
to tha moor na the rest,

But I could n't 'a lived wi' a man, an'  
I knaws it be all fur the best.

## IX

Naäy—let ma stroök tha down till I  
maäkes tha es smooth es silk,

But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou 'd  
not 'a been worth thy milk,

Thou 'd niver 'a cotch'd ony mice but  
'a left me the work to do,

And 'a taäen to the bottle beside, so  
es all that I 'ears be true;

But I loovs tha to maäke thyssen 'appy,  
an' soä purr awaäy, my dear,

Thou 'ed weelligh purr'd ma awaäy  
fro' my oän two 'oonderd a-year.

## X

Sweärin' ageän, you Toms, as ye used  
to do twelve year sin'!

Ye niver eärd Steevie sweär 'cep' it  
wur at a dog coomin' in, 60

An' boäth o' ye mun be fools to be  
hallus a-shawin' your claws,

Fur I niver cared nothink for nei-  
ther—an' one o' ye deäd, ye  
knaws!

Coom, give hoäver then, weänt ye?  
I warrant ye soom fine daäy—

Theree, lig down—an' I shall hev to gie  
one or tother awaäy.

Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye  
shan't hev a drop fro' the patil.

Steevie be right good manners bang  
thruf to the tip o' the tail.

## XI

Robby, git down wi' tha, wilt tha?  
let Steevie coom oop o' my knee.

Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh  
been the Steevie fur me!

Robby wur fust, to be sewer, 'e wur  
burn an' bred i' the 'ouse,

But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver  
patted a mouse. 70

## XII

An' I beänt not vaän, but I knaws I  
'ed led tha a quieter life

Nor her wi' the hepithaph yonder! 'A  
faäithful an' loovin' wife!'

An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an'  
thy windmill oop o' the croft,

Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did  
tha? but that wur a bit ower  
soft,

Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi'  
a niced red faäce, an' es cleän

Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a  
bran-new 'eäd o' the Queeän,

An' thy farmin' es cleän es thysen,  
fur, Steevie, tha kep' it sa neät

That I niver not spied sa much es a  
poppy along wi' the wheat,

An' the wool o' a thistle a-flyin' an'  
seeädin' tha haätet to see;

'T wur es bad es a battle-twig<sup>1</sup> 'ere i'  
my oän blue chaumber to me.

Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur  
I could 'a taäen to tha well, 81

But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a  
bouncin' boy an' a gell.

<sup>1</sup> Earwig.

XIII

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es  
I be mysen o' my cats,  
But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I  
hev n't naw likin' fur brats;  
Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop,  
an' they goßs fur a walk,  
Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an'  
does n't not 'inder the talk!  
But their bottles o' pap, an' their  
mucky bibs, an' the clats an'  
the clouts,  
An' their mashin' their toys to pieæces  
an' maäkin' ma deäff wi' their  
shouts,  
An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if  
they was set upo' springs,  
An' a haxin' ma hawkard questions,  
an' saäyin' ondecnt things, 90  
An' a-callin' ma 'hugly' mayhap to my  
faäce, or a-teärin' my gown —  
Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them  
Tommies — Steevie, git down.

XIV

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you.  
I tell'd ya, na moor o' that!  
Tom, lig there o' the cushion, an'  
tother Tom 'ere o' the mat.

XV

Theere! I ha' master'd *them!* Hed I  
married the Tommies — O Lord,  
To loove an' obaäy the Tommies! I  
could n't 'a stuck by my word.  
To be horder'd about, an' waäked,  
when Molly 'd put out the light,  
By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at  
ony hour o' the night!  
An' the taäble staäin'd wi' 'is aäle, an'  
the mud o' 'is boots o' the stairs,  
An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse, an'  
the mark o' 'is 'eäð o' the chairs!  
An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a  
let me 'a hed my oän waäy, 101  
Sa I likes 'em best wi' taäils when  
they 'ev n't a word to saäy.

XVI

An' I sits i' my oän little parlor, an'  
sarved by my oän little lass,  
Wi' my oän little garden outside, an'  
my oän bed o' sparrow-grass,  
An' my oän door-poorch wi' the wood-  
bine an' jessmine a-dressin' it  
greeäa,

An' my oän fine Jackman i' purple a  
roäbin' the 'ouse like a queeän.

XVII

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens  
es I be abroad i' the laänes,  
When I goßs fur to coomfurt the poor  
es be down wi' their haäches  
an' their paäins:  
An' a haäff-pot o' jam, or a mossel o'  
meät when it beänt too dear,  
They maäkes ma a graäter lady nor  
'er i' the mansion theer, 110  
Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how  
much to spare or to spend;  
An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if  
soä please God, to the hend.

XVIII

Mew! mew! — Bess wi' the milk! what  
ha maäde our Molly sa laäte?  
It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an'  
theere — it be strikin' height —  
'Cushie wur craäzed fur 'er cauf,' well  
— I 'eärd 'er a-maäkin' 'er moän,  
An' I thowt to mysen, 'thank God that  
I hev n't naw cauf o' my oän.'  
Theere!

Set it down!

Now, Robby!  
You Tommies shall waäit to-night  
Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their lap  
— an' it sarves ye right.

PROLOGUE

TO GENERAL HAMLEY

Our birches yellowing and from each  
The light leaf falling fast,  
While squirrels from our fiery beech  
Were bearing off the mast,  
You came, and look'd and loved the  
view  
Long-known and loved by me,  
Green Sussex fading into blue  
With one gray glimpse of sea;  
And, gazing from this height alone,  
We spoke of what had been  
Most marvellous in the wars your own  
Crimean eyes had seen;  
And — now like old-world inns that  
take  
Some warrior for a sign

That therewithin a guest may make  
 True cheer with honest wine —  
 Because you heard the lines I read  
 Nor utter'd word of blame,  
 I dare without your leave to head  
 These rhymings with your name,  
 Who know you but as one of those  
 I fain would meet again,  
 Yet know you, as your England knows  
 That you and all your men  
 Were soldiers to her heart's desire,  
 When, in the vanish'd year,  
 You saw the league-long rampart-fire  
 Flare from Tel-el-Kebir  
 Thro' darkness, and the foe was  
 driven,  
 And Wolseley overthrew  
 Arábi, and the stars in heaven  
 Paled, and the glory grew.

### THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA

OCTOBER 25, 1854

#### I

THE charge of the gallant three hundred,  
 the Heavy Brigade !  
 Down the hill, down the hill, thou-  
 sands of Russians,  
 Thousands of horsemen, drew to the  
 valley — and stay'd ;  
 For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hun-  
 dred were riding by  
 When the points of the Russian lances  
 arose in the sky ;  
 And he call'd, ' Left wheel into line ! '  
 and they wheel'd and obey'd.  
 Then he look'd at the host that had  
 halted he knew not why,  
 And he turn'd half round, and he bade  
 his trumpeter sound  
 To the charge, and he rode on ahead,  
 as he waved his blade  
 To the gallant three hundred whose  
 glory will never die —  
 ' Follow, ' and up the hill, up the hill,  
 up the hill,  
 Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

#### II

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge,  
 and the might of the fight !  
 Thousands of horsemen had gather'd  
 there on the height,

With a wing push'd out to the left and  
 a wing to the right,  
 And who shall escape if they close ?  
 but he dash'd up alone  
 Thro' the great gray slope of men,  
 Sway'd his sabre, and held his own  
 Like an Englishman there and then.  
 All in a moment follow'd with force  
 Three that were next in their fiery  
 course,  
 Wedged themselves in between horse  
 and horse,  
 Fought for their lives in the narrow  
 gap they had made —  
 Four amid thousands ! and up the hill,  
 up the hill,  
 Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the  
 Heavy Brigade.

#### III

Fell like a cannon-shot,  
 Burst like a thunderbolt,  
 Crash'd like a hurricane,  
 Broke thro' the mass from below,  
 Drove thro' the midst of the foe,  
 Plunged up and down, to and fro,  
 Rode flashing blow upon blow,  
 Brave Inniskillens and Greys  
 Whirling their sabres in circles of  
 light !  
 And some of us, all in amaze,  
 Who were held for a while from the  
 fight,  
 And were only standing at gaze,  
 When the dark-muffled Russian crowd  
 Folded its wings from the left and the  
 right,  
 And roll'd them around like a cloud, —  
 O, mad for the charge and the battle  
 were we,  
 When our own good redcoats sank  
 from sight,  
 Like drops of blood in a dark-gray sea,  
 And we turn'd to each other, whisper-  
 ing, all dismay'd,  
 ' Lost are the gallant three hundred of  
 Scarlett's Brigade ! '

#### IV

' Lost one and all ' were the words  
 Mutter'd in our dismay ;  
 But they rode like victors and lords  
 Thro' the forest of lances and swords  
 In the heart of the Russian hordes,  
 They rode, or they stood at bay  
 Struck with the sword-hand and slew,



'The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and the might of the fight'

Down with the bridle-hand drew  
The foe from the saddle and threw  
Underfoot there in the fray —  
Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock  
In the wave of a stormy day;  
Till suddenly shock upon shock  
Stagger'd the mass from without,  
Drove it in wild disarray,  
For our men gallopt up with a cheer  
and a shout,  
And the foeman surged, and waver'd,  
and reel'd  
Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,  
out of the field,  
And over the brow and away.

v

Glory to each and to all, and the  
charge that they made!  
Glory to all the three hundred, and all  
the Brigade!

NOTE.—The 'three hundred' of the 'Heavy Brigade' who made this famous charge were the Scots Greys and the 2d squadron of Inniskillens; the remainder of the 'Heavy Brigade' subsequently dashing up to their support.

The 'three' were Scarlett's aide-de-camp, Elliot, and the trumpeter, and Shegog the orderly, who had been close behind him.

## EPILOGUE

IRENE.

Not this way will you set your name  
A star among the stars.

POET.

What way?

IRENE.

You praise when you should blame  
The barbarism of wars.  
A juster epoch has begun.



## POET.

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,  
And that bright hair the modern sun,  
Those eyes the blue to-day,  
You wrong me, passionate little friend.  
I would that wars should cease,  
I would the globe from end to end  
And some new Spirit o'erbear the  
old,

Might sow and reap in peace,  
Or Trade re-frain the Powers  
From war with kindly links of gold,  
Or Love with wreaths of flowers.  
Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all  
My friends and brother souls,  
With all the peoples, great and small,  
That wheel between the poles.  
But since our mortal shadow, Ill,  
To waste this earth began —  
Perchance from some abuse of Will  
In worlds before the man  
Involving ours — he needs must fight  
To make true peace his own,  
He needs must combat might with  
might,

Or Might world rule alone;  
And who loves war for war's own sake  
Is fool, or crazed, or worse;  
But let the patriot-soldier take  
His meed of fame in verse;  
Nay—tho' that realm were in the  
wrong

For which her warriors bleed,  
It still were right to crown with song  
The warrior's noble deed —

A crown the Singer hopes may last,  
For so the deed endures;

But Song will vanish in the Vast;

And that large phrase of yours  
'A star among the stars,' my dear,  
Is girlish talk at best;

For dare we dally with the sphere  
As he did half in jest,

Old Horace? 'I will strike,' said he,  
'The stars with head sublime,'

But scarce could see, as now we see,  
The man in space and time,

So drew perchance a happier lot  
Than ours, who rhyme to-day.

The fires that arch this dusky dot —  
Yon myriad-world'd way —

The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,  
World-isles in lonely skies,

Whole heavens within themselves,  
amaze

Our brief humanities.

And so does Earth; for Homer's fame,  
Tho' carved in harder stone —  
The falling drop will make his name  
As mortal as my own.

## IRENE.

No!

## POET.

Let it live then — ay, till when?  
Earth passes, all is lost  
In what they prophesy, our wise  
men,  
Sun-flame or sunless frost,  
And deed and song alike are swept  
Away, and all in vain  
As far as man can see, except  
The man himself remain;  
And tho', in this lean age forlorn,  
Too many a voice may cry  
That man can have no after-morn,  
Not yet of those am I.  
The man remains, and whatsoe'er  
He wrought of good or brave  
Will mould him thro' the cycle-year  
That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his art  
Not all in vain may plead  
'The song that nerves a nation's heart  
Is in itself a deed.'

## TO VIRGIL

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF  
THE MANTUANS FOR THE NINE-  
TEENTH CENTENARY OF VIR-  
GIL'S DEATH

## I

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest  
Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,  
Ilion falling, Rome arising,  
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's  
pyre:

## II

Landscape-lover, lord of language  
more than he that sang the  
'Works and Days,'  
All the chosen coin of fancy  
flashing out from many a golden  
phrase;

## III

Thou that singest wheat and wood-  
land,  
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse  
and herd ;  
All the charm of all the Muses  
often flowering in a lonely word ;

## IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus  
piping underneath his beechen  
bowers ;  
Poet of the poet-satyr  
whom the laughing shepherd  
bound with flowers ;

## V

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying  
in the blissful years again to be,  
Summers of the snakeless meadow,  
unlaborious earth and oarless sea ;

## VI

Thou that seest Universal  
Nature moved by Universal Mind ;  
Thou majestic in thy sadness  
at the doubtful doom of human  
kind ;

## VII

Light among the vanish'd ages ;  
star that gildest yet this phantom  
shore ;  
Golden branch amid the shadows,  
kings and realms that pass to rise  
no more ;

## VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,  
fallen every purple Cæsar's dome —  
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm  
sound forever of Imperial Rome —

## IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,  
and the Rome of freemen holds  
her place,  
I, from out the Northern Island  
sunder'd once from all the human  
race,

## X

I salute thee, Mantovano,  
I that loved thee since my day  
began,  
Wielder of the stateliest measure  
ever moulded by the lips of man.

## THE DEAD PROPHET

182—

## I

Dead !  
And the Muses cried with a stormy  
cry,  
' Send them no more, for evermore.  
Let the people die.'

## II

Dead !  
' Is it *he* then brought so low ?'  
And a careless people flock'd from the  
fields  
With a purse to pay for the show.

## III

Dead, who had served his time,  
Was one of the people's kings,  
Had labor'd in lifting them out of  
slime,  
And showing them, souls have  
wings !

## IV

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.  
His friends had stript him bare,  
And roll'd his nakedness every way  
That all the crowd might stare.

## V

A storm-worn signpost not to be read  
And a tree with a moulder'd nest  
On its barkless bones, stood stark  
by the dead ;  
And behind him, low in the West,

## VI

With shifting ladders of shadow and  
light,  
And blurr'd in color and form,  
The sun hung over the gates of night,  
And glared at a coming storm.

## VII

Then glided a vulturous beldam forth,  
That on dumb death had thriven ;  
They call'd her ' Reverence ' here upon  
earth,  
And ' The Curse of the Prophet ' in  
heaven.

## VIII

She knelt — ' We worship him ' — all  
but wept —

'So great, so noble, was he !'  
She clear'd her sight, she arose, she  
swept  
The dust of earth from her knee.

## IX

'Great! for he spoke and the people  
heard,  
And his eloquence caught like a  
flame  
From zone to zone of the world, till  
his word  
Had won him a noble name.

## X

'Noble! he sung, and the sweet sound  
ran  
Thro' palace and cottage door,  
For he touch'd on the whole sad planet  
of man,  
The kings and the rich and the poor ;

## XI

'And he sung not alone of an old sun  
set,  
But a sun coming up in his youth !  
'Great and noble—O, yes—but yet—  
For man is a lover of truth,

## XII

'And bound to follow, wherever she  
go  
Stark-naked, and up or down,  
Thro' her high hill-passes of stainless  
snow,  
Or the foulest sewer of the town—

## XIII

'Noble and great—O, ay—but then,  
Tho' a prophet should have his  
due,  
Was he noblier-fashion'd than other  
men?  
Shall we see to it, I and you?

## XIV

'For since he would sit on a prophet's  
seat,  
As a lord of the human soul,  
We needs must scan him from head to  
feet,  
Were it but for a wart or a mole ?'

## XV

His wife and his child stood by him in  
tears,

But she—she push'd them aside.  
'Tho' a name may last for a thousand  
years,  
Yet a truth is a truth,' she cried.

## XVI

And she that had haunted his path-  
way still,  
Had often truckled and cower'd  
When he rose in his wrath, and had  
yielded her will  
To the master, as overpower'd,

## XVII

She tumbled his helpless corpse  
about.  
'Small blemish upon the skin !  
But I think we know what is fair  
without  
Is often as foul within.'

## XVIII

She crouch'd, she tore him part from  
part,  
And out of his body she drew  
The red 'blood-eagle'<sup>1</sup> of liver and  
heart ;  
She held them up to the view ;

## XIX

She gabbled, as she groped in the  
dead,  
And all the people were pleased ;  
'See, what a little heart,' she said,  
'And the liver is half-diseased !'

## XX

She tore the prophet after death,  
And the people paid her well.  
Lightnings flicker'd along the heath ;  
One shriek'd, 'The fires of hell !'

## EARLY SPRING

## I

ONCE more the Heavenly Power  
Makes all things new,  
And domes the red-plow'd hills  
With loving blue ;  
The blackbirds have their wills,  
The throistles too.

<sup>1</sup> Old Viking term for lungs, liver, etc.,  
when torn by the conqueror out of the body  
of the conquered.

II

Opens a door in heaven ;  
From skies of glass  
A Jacob's ladder falls  
On greening grass,  
And o'er the mountain-walls  
Young angels pass.

III

Before them fleets the shower,  
And burst the buds,  
And shine the level lands,  
And flash the floods ;  
The stars are from their hands  
Flung thro' the woods,

IV

The woods with living airs  
How softly fann'd,  
Light airs from where the deep,  
All down the sand,  
Is breathing in his sleep,  
Heard by the land.

V

O, follow, leaping blood,  
The season's lure !  
O heart, look down and up  
Serene, secure,  
Warm as the crocus cup,  
Like snowdrops, pure !

VI

Past, Future glimpse and fade  
Thro' some slight spell,  
A gleam from yonder vale,  
Some far blue fell,  
And sympathies, how frail,  
In sound and smell !

VII

Till at thy chuckled note,  
Thou twinkling bird,  
The fairy fancies range,  
And, lightly stirr'd,  
Ring little bells of change  
From word to word.

VIII

For now the Heavenly Power  
Makes all things new,  
And thaws the cold, and fills  
The flower with dew ;  
The blackbirds have their wills,  
The poets too.

PREFATORY POEM TO MY  
BROTHER'S SONNETS

MIDNIGHT, JUNE 30, 1879

I

MIDNIGHT — in no midsummer tune  
The breakers lash the shores ;  
The cuckoo of a joyless June  
Is calling out of doors.

And thou hast vanish'd from thine own  
To that which looks like rest,  
True brother, only to be known  
By those who love thee best.

II

Midnight — and joyless June gone by,  
And from the deluged park  
The cuckoo of a worse July  
Is calling thro' the dark ;

But thou art silent underground,  
And o'er thee streams the rain,  
True poet, surely to be found  
When Truth is found again.

III

And, now to these unsummer'd skies  
The summer bird is still,  
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries  
From out a phantom hill ;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun  
Of sixty years away,  
The light of days when life begun,  
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with  
thee,  
As all my hopes were thine —  
As all thou wert was one with me,  
May all thou art be mine !

‘FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE’

Row us out from Desenzano, to your  
Sirmione row !  
So they row'd, and there we landed —  
‘O venusta Sirmio !’  
There to me thro' all the groves of  
olive in the summer glow,  
There beneath the Roman ruin where  
the purple flowers grow,

Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the  
 Poet's hopeless woe,  
 Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen  
 hundred years ago,  
 'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we  
 wander'd to and fro  
 Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the  
 Garda Lake below  
 Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-  
 silvery Sirmio!

### HELEN'S TOWER

[Written at the request of my friend,  
 Lord Dufferin.]

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,  
 Dominant over sea and land.  
 Son's love built me, and I hold  
 Mother's love in letter'd gold.  
 Love is in and out of time,  
 I am mortal stone and lime.  
 Would my granite girth were strong  
 As either love, to last as long!  
 I should wear my crown entire  
 To and from the Doomsday fire,  
 And be found of angel eyes  
 In earth's recurring Paradise.

### EPITAPH ON LORD STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THOU third great Canning, stand  
 among our best  
 And noblest, now thy long day's  
 work hath ceased,  
 Here silent in our Minster of the  
 West  
 Who wert the voice of England in  
 the East.

### EPITAPH ON GENERAL GOR- DON

IN THE GORDON BOYS' NATIONAL  
 MEMORIAL HOME NEAR WOKING

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, and  
 tyrant's foe,  
 Now somewhere dead far in the  
 waste Soudan,

Thou livest in all hearts, for all men  
 know  
 This earth has never borne a nobler  
 man.

### EPITAPH ON CAXTON

IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER

*Fiat Lux* (his motto)

Thy prayer was 'Light—more Light  
 —while Time shall last!'  
 Thou sawest a glory growing on  
 the night,  
 But not the shadows which that light  
 would cast,  
 Till shadows vanish in the Light of  
 Light.

### TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL

O PATRIOT Statesman, be thou wise  
 to know  
 The limits of resistance, and the bounds  
 Determining concession; still be bold  
 Not only to slight praise but suffer  
 scorn;  
 And be thy heart a fortress to maintain  
 The day against the moment, and the  
 year  
 Against the day; thy voice, a music  
 heard  
 Thro' all the yells and counter-yells  
 of feud  
 And faction, and thy will, a power to  
 make  
 This ever-changing world of circum-  
 stance,  
 In changing, chime with never-chang-  
 ing Law.

### HANDS ALL ROUND<sup>1</sup>

FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn  
 night,  
 Then drink to England, every guest;  
 That man's the best Cosmopolite  
 Who loves his native country best.  
 May freedom's oak for ever live  
 With stronger life from day to day.

<sup>1</sup> Written after the Queen's escape from  
 assassination, 1882.

That man's the true Conservative  
Who lops the moulder'd branch  
away.

Hands all round !  
God the traitor's hope confound !  
To this great cause of Freedom drink,  
my friends,  
And the great name of England,  
round and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long  
To keep our English Empire whole !  
To all our noble sons, the strong  
New England of the Southern Pole !  
To England under Indian skies,  
To those dark millions of her realm !  
To Canada whom we love and prize,  
Whatever statesman hold the helm.

Hands all round !  
God the traitor's hope confound !  
To this great name of England drink,  
my friends,  
And all her glorious empire, round  
and round.

To all our statesmen so they be  
True leaders of the land's desire !  
To both our Houses, may they see  
Beyond the borough and the shire !  
We sail'd wherever ship could sail,  
We founded many a mighty state ;  
Pray God our greatness may not fail  
Thro' craven fears of being great !  
Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !  
To this great cause of Freedom drink,  
my friends,  
And the great name of England,  
round and round.

## FREEDOM

### I

O THOU so fair in summers gone,  
While yet thy fresh and virgin  
soul  
Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,  
The glittering Capitol ;

### II

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,  
But scarce of such majestic mien  
As here with forehead vapor-swathed  
In meadows ever green ;

### III

For thou — when Athens reign'd and  
Rome,  
Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with  
pain  
To mark in many a freeman's home  
The slave, the scourge, the chain ;

### IV

O follower of the Vision, still  
In motion to the distant gleam,  
Howe'er blind force and brainless  
will  
May jar thy golden dream

### V

Of Knowledge fusing class with  
class,  
Of civic Hate no more to be,  
Of Love to leaven all the mass,  
Till every soul be free ;

### VI

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not  
mar  
By changes all too fierce and fast  
This order of her Human Star,  
This heritage of the past ;

### VII

O scorner of the party cry  
That wanders from the public good,  
Thou — when the nations rear on  
high  
Their idol smear'd with blood,

### VIII

And when they roll their idol down —  
Of saner worship sanely proud ;  
Thou loather of the lawless crown  
As of the lawless crowd ;

### IX

How long thine ever-growing mind  
Hath still'd the blast and strow'd  
the wave,  
Tho' some of late would raise a wind  
To sing thee to thy grave,

### X

Men loud against all forms of power —  
Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous  
tongues,  
Expecting all things in an hour —  
Brass mouths and iron lungs !

POETS AND THEIR BIBLIO-  
GRAPHIES

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier  
skies,

Old Virgil who would write ten  
lines, they say,

At dawn, and lavish all the golden  
day

To make them wealthier in his readers'  
eyes;

And you, old popular Horace, you  
the wise

Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd  
lay,

And you, that wear a wreath of  
sweeter bay,

Catullus, whose dead songster never  
dies;

If, glancing downward on the kindly  
sphere

That once had roll'd you round and  
round the sun,

You see your Art still shrined in hu-  
man shelves,

You should be jubilant that you flour-  
ish'd here

\* Before the Love of Letters, over-  
done,

Had swamp'd the sacred poets with  
themselves.

TO H. R. H. PRINCESS BEA-  
TRICE

Two Suns of Love make day of hu-  
man life,

Which else with all its pains, and  
griefs, and deaths,

Were utter darkness—one, the Sun  
of dawn

That brightens thro' the Mother's  
tender eyes,

And warms the child's awakening  
world—and one

The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,  
Which from her household orbit draws  
the child

To move in other spheres. The Mo-  
ther weeps

At that white funeral of the single  
life,

Her maiden daughter's marriage; and  
her tears

Are half of pleasure, half of pain—  
the child

Is happy—even in leaving *her!* but  
thou,

True daughter, whose all-faithful,  
filial eyes

Have seen the loneliness of earthly  
thrones,

Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown,  
nor let

This later light of Love have risen in  
vain,

But moving thro' the Mother's home,  
between

The two that love thee, lead a summer  
life,

Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to  
each Love,

Like some conjectured planet in mid  
heaven

Between two suns, and drawing down  
from both

The light and genial warmth of double  
day.



'Late, my grandson ! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracts '

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER, ETC.

### TO MY WIFE

I DEDICATE THIS DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE AND THE POEMS WHICH FOLLOW

#### LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

LATE, my grandson ! half the morning  
have I paced these sandy tracts,  
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roar-  
ing into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood  
while I heard the curlews call,  
I myself so close on death, and death  
itself in Locksley Hall.

So—your happy suit was blasted—  
she the faultless, the divine ;  
And you liken—boyish babble—this  
boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless  
of a foolish past ;  
Babble, babble ; our old England may  
go down in babble at last.

'Curse him !' curse your fellow-vic-  
tim ? call him dotard in your  
rage ?

Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well  
might fool a dotard's age. 10

Jilted for a wealthier ! wealthier ? yet  
perhaps she was not wise ;  
I remember how you kiss'd the minia-  
ture with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting—  
Amy's arms about my neck—  
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting  
on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she  
that clasp'd my neck had flown ;  
I was left within the shadow sitting  
on the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment,  
will you sicken for her sake ?  
You, not you ! your modern amorist  
is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy  
was a timid child ;  
But your Judith—but your world-  
ling—*she* had never driven me  
wild. 20

She that holds the diamond necklace  
dearer than the golden ring,



She that finds a winter sunset fairer  
than a morn of spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on  
his briefer lease of life,  
While she vows 'till death shall part  
us,' she the would-be-widow  
wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings—  
father, mother—be content,  
Even the homely farm can teach us  
there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking  
now into the ground,  
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with  
his feet upon the hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to  
crush the Moslem in his pride;  
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead  
the cause in which he died. 30

Yet how often I and Amy in the  
mouldering aisle have stood,  
Gazing for one pensive moment on  
that founder of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where  
of old we knelt in prayer,  
Close beneath the casement crimson  
with the shield of Locksley—  
there,

All in white Italian marble, looking  
still as if she smiled,  
Lies my Amy dead in childbirth, dead  
the mother, dead the child.

Dead—and sixty years ago, and dead  
her aged husband now—  
I, this old white-headed dreamer,  
stoop't and kiss'd her marble  
brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies,  
furies, curses, passionate tears,  
Gone like fires and floods and earth-  
quakes of the planet's dawning  
years. 40

Fires that shook me once, but now to  
silent ashes fallen away.  
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the  
gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and  
mute below the chancel stones,  
All his virtues—I forgive them—  
black in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac,  
some in fight against the foe,  
Some thro' age and slow diseases,  
gone as all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my  
life in golden sequence ran,  
She with all the charm of woman, she  
with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom,  
Edith, yet so lowly-sweet,  
Woman to her inmost heart, and wo-  
man to her tender feet, 50

Very woman of very woman, nurse of  
ailing body and mind,  
She that link'd again the broken chain  
that bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while  
I wander'd down the coast,  
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling  
at the slighter ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard  
early lost at sea;  
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin  
and mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother,  
wearying to be left alone,  
Pining for the stronger heart that once  
had beat beside her own.

Truth, for truth is truth, he worshipt,  
being true as he was brave;  
Good, for good is good, he fol-  
low'd, yet he look'd beyond the  
grave, 60

Wiser there than you, that crowning  
barren Death as lord of all,  
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing  
curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who  
saw the death, but kept the  
deck,  
Saving women and their babes, and  
sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever ! Ever ? no — for since  
our dying race began,  
Ever, ever, and for ever was the lead-  
ing light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd  
the slave, and slew the wife  
Felt within themselves the sacred pas-  
sion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunt-  
ing grounds beyond the night ;  
Even the black Australian dying hopes  
he shall return, a white. 70

'Forward' rang the voices then, and  
of the many mine was one.  
Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till  
ten thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old As-  
syrian kings would flay  
Captives whom they caught in battle  
— iron-hearted victors they. 80

Ages after, while in Asia, he that led  
the wild Moguls,  
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty  
thousand human skulls ;



'Sinking with the sinking wreck'

Truth for truth, and good for good !  
The good, the true, the pure,  
the just —

Take the charm 'For ever' from them,  
and they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of 'Forward, Forward,'  
lost within a growing gloom ;  
Lost, or only heard in silence from  
the silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, tri-  
umphs over time and space,  
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage  
into commonest commonplace !

Then, and here in Edward's time, an  
age of noblest English names,  
Christian conquerors took and flung  
the conquer'd Christian into  
flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters,  
said the Greatest of the great ;  
Christian love among the Churches  
look'd the twin of heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man  
had coin'd himself a curse :  
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which  
was crueller ? which was worse ?

France had shown a light to all men,  
preach'd a Gospel, all men's  
good;

Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd<sup>89</sup>  
and slaked the light with blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain,  
watching till the day begun —  
Crown'd with sunlight — over dark-  
ness — from the still unrisen  
sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the  
passions of the primal clan?  
'Kill your enemy, for you hate him,'  
still, 'your enemy' was a man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants  
maim the helpless horse, and  
drive

Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn  
the kindlier brutes alive.

Brutes, the brutes are not your  
wrongers — burnt at midnight,  
found at morn,

Twisted hard in mortal agony with  
their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we  
devils? are we men?

Sweet Saint Francis of Assisi, would  
that he were here again,'<sup>100</sup>

He that in his Catholic wholeness used  
to call the very flowers

Sisters, brothers — and the beasts —  
whose pains are hardly less than  
ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who  
can tell how all will end?

Read the wide world's annals, you,  
and take their wisdom for your  
friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present  
fatal daughter of the Past,  
Shape your heart to front the hour,  
but dream not that the hour  
will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave  
you courage to be wise —

When was age so cramm'd with men-  
ace? madness? written, spoken  
lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and,  
laughing sober fact to scorn,  
Cries to weakest as to strongest, 'Ye  
are equals, equal-born.'<sup>110</sup>

Equal-born? O, yes, if yonder hill be  
level with the flat.

Charm us, orator, till the lion look no  
larger than the cat,

Till the cat thro' that mirage of over-  
heated language loom

Larger than the lion, — Demos end in  
working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall  
we fight her? shall we yield?

Pause! before you sound the trumpet,  
hear the voices from the field.

Those three hundred millions under  
one Imperial sceptre now,

Shall we hold them? shall we loose  
them? take the suffrage of the  
plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow  
Truth if only you and you,

Rivals of realm-ruining party, when  
you speak were wholly true.<sup>120</sup>

Plowmen, shepherds, have I found,  
and more than once, and still  
could find,

Sons of God, and kings of men in utter  
nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to  
the practised hustings-liar;

So the higher yields the lower, while  
the lower is the higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal  
born by right divine;

Here and there my lord is lower than  
his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once  
again the sickening game;

Freedom, free to slay herself, and dy-  
ing while they shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom  
known to Europe, known to all;

Step by step we rose to greatness, —  
thro' the tonguesters we may  
fall.<sup>130</sup>

You that woo the Voices — tell them  
'old experience is a fool,'

Teach your flatter'd kings that only  
those who cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but  
set no meek ones in their place;  
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt  
your offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and,  
yelling with the yelling street,  
Set the feet above the brain and swear  
the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without  
the faith, without the hope,  
Break the State, the Church, the  
Throne, and roll their ruins  
down the slope.

Authors — essayist, atheist, novelist,  
realist, rhymester, play your  
part,

Paint the mortal shame of nature with  
the living hues of art. 140

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip  
your own foul passions bare;  
Down with Reticence, down with  
Reverence — forward — naked  
— let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with  
the drainage of your sewer;  
Send the drain into the fountain, lest  
the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in  
the troughs of Zolaism, —  
Forward, forward, ay, and backward,  
downward too into the abysm!

Do your best to charm the worst, to  
lower the rising race of men;  
Have we risen from out the beast,  
then back into the beast again?

Only 'dust to dust' for me that sicken  
at your lawless din,  
Dust in wholesome old-world dust be-  
fore the newer world begin. 150

Heated am I? you — you wonder —  
well, it scarce becomes mine  
age —

Patience! let the dying actor mouth  
his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the  
dotard fall asleep?

Noises of a current narrowing, not the  
music of a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think  
gray thoughts, for I am gray;  
After all the stormy changes shall we  
find a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jaco-  
binism and Jacquerie,  
Some diviner force to guide us thro'  
the days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the systems,  
kingdoms and republics fall,  
Something kindlier, higher, holier —  
all for each and each for all? 160

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led  
by Justice, Love, and Truth;  
All the millions one at length with all  
the visions of my youth?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no  
man halt, or deaf, or blind;  
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier  
body, larger mind?

Earth at last a warless world, a single  
race, a single tongue —  
I have seen her far away — for is not  
Earth as yet so young? —

Every tiger madness muzzled, every  
serpent passion kill'd,  
Every grim ravine a garden, every  
blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to  
either pole she smiles,  
Universal ocean softly washing all her  
warless isles. 170

Warless? when her tens are thou-  
sands, and her thousands mil-  
lions, then —  
All her harvest all too narrow — who  
can fancy warless men?

Warless? war will die out late then.  
Will it ever? late or soon?

Can it, till this outworn earth be  
dead as yon dead world the  
moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. —  
On this day and at this hour,  
In this gap between the sandhills,  
whence you see the Locksley  
tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting —  
Amy — sixty years ago —  
She and I — the moon was falling  
greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and  
even where you see her now —  
Here we stood and claspt each other,  
swore the seeming-deathless  
vow. — 180

Dead, but how her living glory lights  
the hall, the dune, the grass!  
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and  
the sun himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at  
this earthlier earth of ours,  
Closer on the sun, perhaps a world of  
never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the  
Bringer home of all good  
things —

All good things may move in Hesper,  
perfect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper — Venus — were we native to  
that splendor or in Mars,  
We should see the globe we groan in,  
fairest of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage,  
craft and madness, lust and  
spite,

Roaring London, raving Paris, in that  
point of peaceful light? 190

Might we not in glancing heavenward  
on a star so silver-fair,

Yearn, and clasp the hands and mur-  
mur, 'Would to God that we  
were there'?

Forward, backward, backward, for-  
ward, in the immeasurable sea,

Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than  
can be known to you or me.

All the suns — are these but symbols  
of innumerable man,  
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the  
planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in  
every peopled sphere?

Well, be grateful for the sounding  
watchword 'Evolution' here,

Evolution ever climbing after some  
ideal good,

And Reversion ever dragging Evolu-  
tion in the mud. 200

What are men that He should heed us?  
cried the king of sacred song;

Insects of an hour, that hourly work  
their brother insect wrong,

While the silent heavens roll, and suns  
along their fiery way,

All their planets whirling round them,  
flash a million miles a day.

Many an æon moulded earth before  
her highest, man, was born,

Many an æon too may pass when earth  
is manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded —  
pools of salt, and plots of land —

Shallow skin of green and azure —  
chains of mountain, grains of  
sand!

Only That which made us meant us to  
be mightier by and by, 209

Set the sphere of all the boundless  
heavens within the human eye,

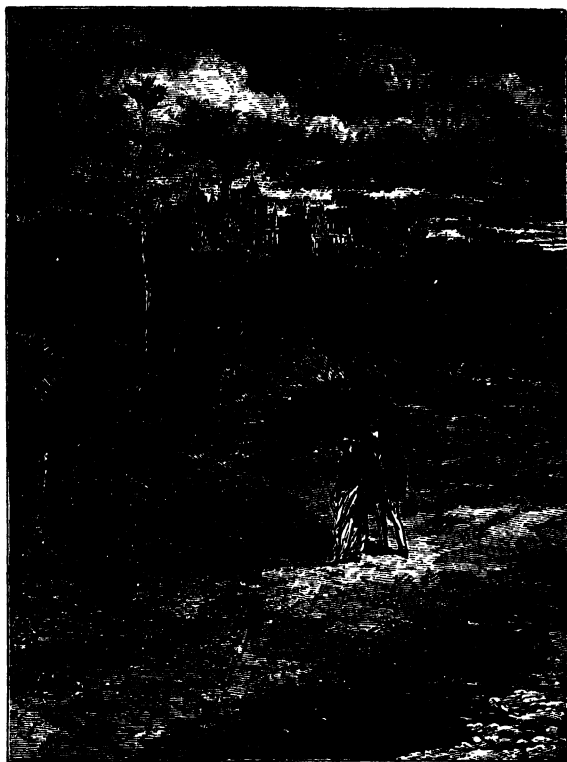
Sent the shadow of Himself, the  
boundless, thro' the human soul;

Boundless inward in the atom, bound-  
less outward in the Whole.

. . . . .

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson,  
here the lion-guarded gate.

Not to-night in Locksley Hall — to-  
morrow — you, you come so  
late.



'In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the Locksley tower,  
Here we met, our latest meeting — Amy — sixty years ago'

Wreck'd — your train — or all but  
wreck'd ? a shatter'd wheel ? a  
vicious boy !

Good, this forward, you that preach  
it, is it well to wish you joy ?

Is it well that while we range with  
Science, glorying in the Time,  
City children soak and blacken soul  
and sense in city slime ?

There among the glooming alleys Pro-  
gress halts on palsied feet,  
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by  
the thousand on the street. 230

There the master scrimps his haggard  
sempstress of her daily bread,  
There a single sordid attic holds the  
living and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever  
creeps across the rotted floor,  
And the crowded couch of incest in-  
the warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'For-  
ward,' yours are hope and  
youth, but I —

Eighty winters leave the dog too lame  
to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and  
passing now into the night ;  
Yet I would the rising race were half  
as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of even ?  
light the glimmer of the dawn ?  
Aged eyes may take the growing glim-  
mer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myriad coming  
changes earth will be <sup>231</sup>  
Something other than the wildest  
modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or  
if she gain her earthly-best,  
Would she find her human offspring  
this ideal man at rest ?

Forward then, but still remember how  
the course of Time will swerve,  
Crook and turn upon itself in many a  
backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson !  
Death and Silence hold their  
own.

Leave the master in the first dark  
hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound  
and honest, rustic Squire,  
Kindly landlord, boon companion —  
youthful jealousy is a liar. <sup>240</sup>

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust  
the madness from your brain.  
Let the trampled serpent show you  
that you have not lived in  
vain.

Youthful ! youth and age are scholars  
yet but in the lower school,  
Nor is he the wisest man who never  
proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village —  
Art and Grace are less and  
less :  
Science grows and Beauty dwindles —  
roofs of slated hideousness !

There is one old hostel left us where  
they swing the Locksley shield,

Till the peasant cow shall butt the  
'lion passant' from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History,  
poor old Poetry, passing hence,  
In the common deluge drowning old  
political common-sense ! <sup>250</sup>

Poor old voice of eighty crying after  
voices that have fled !  
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my  
steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as  
the phantom disappears,  
Forward far and far from here is all  
the hope of eighty years.

. . . . .

In this hostel — I remember — I repent  
it o'er his grave —  
Like a clown — by chance he met me  
— I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer  
mantles all the mouldering  
bricks —

I was then in early boyhood, Edith  
but a child of six —

While I shelter'd in this archway from  
a day of driving showers —  
Peep't the winsome face of Edith like  
a flower among the flowers. <sup>260</sup>

Here to-night ! the Hall to-morrow,  
when they toll the chapel bell !  
Shall I hear in one dark room a wail-  
ing, 'I have loved thee well' ?

Then a peal that shakes the portal —  
one has come to claim his  
bride,  
Her that shrank, and put me from  
her, shriek'd, and started from  
my side —

Silent echoes ! You, my Leonard, use  
and not abuse your day,  
Move among your people, know them,  
follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to  
help his homelier brother men,

Served the poor, and built the cottage,  
raised the school, and drain'd the fen.

Hears he now the voice that wrong'd him?  
who shall swear it cannot be?

Earth would never touch her worst,  
were one in fifty such as he. 270

Ere she gain her heavenly-best, a God  
must mingle with the game.

Nay, there may be those about us  
whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers  
of Good, the Powers of Ill,  
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in  
the fountains of the will.

Follow you the star that lights a  
desert pathway, yours or mine.  
Forward, till you see the Highest  
Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right—  
for man can half-control his  
doom—

Till you find the deathless Angel seated  
in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly  
and mingle with the past.

I that loathed have come to love  
him. Love will conquer at the  
last. 280

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I  
and you will bear the pall;

Then I leave thee lord and master,  
latest lord of Locksley Hall.

### THE FLEET

#### I

You, you, *if* you shall fail to understand

What England is, and what her all-in-all,

On you will come the curse of all the land,

Should this old England fall  
Which Nelson left so great.

#### II

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power  
on earth,

Our own fair isle, the lord of every sea—

Her fuller franchise—what would  
that be worth—

Her ancient fame of Free—

Were she . . . a fallen state?

#### III

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so small,

Her island-myriads fed from alien lands—

The fleet of England is her all-in-all;

Her fleet is in your hands,  
And in her fleet her fate.

#### IV

You, you, that have the ordering of  
her fleet,

*If* you should only compass her disgrace,

When all men starve, the wild mob's  
million feet

Will kick you from your place,  
But then too late, too late.

### OPENING OF THE INDIAN AND COLONIAL EXHIBITION BY THE QUEEN

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE  
PRINCE OF WALES

#### I

WELCOME, welcome with one voice!

In your welfare we rejoice,

Sons and brothers that have sent,

From isle and cape and continent,

Produce of your field and flood,

Mount and mine, and primal wood;

Works of subtle brain and hand,

And splendors of the morning land,

Gifts from every British zone;

Britons, hold your own!

#### II

May we find, as ages run,

The mother featured in the son;

And may yours for ever be

That old strength and constancy



Which has made your fathers great  
In our ancient island State,  
And wherever her flag fly,  
Glorying between sea and sky,  
Makes the might of Britain known;  
Britons, hold your own !

## III

Britain fought her sons of yore—  
Britain fail'd; and never more,  
Careless of our growing kin,  
Shall we sin our fathers' sin,  
Men that in a narrower day—  
Unprophetic rulers they—  
Drove from out the mother's nest  
That young eagle of the West  
To forage for herself alone;  
Britons, hold your own !

## IV

Sharers of our glorious past,  
Brothers, must we part at last ?  
Shall we not thro' good and ill  
Cleave to one another still ?  
Britain's myriad voices call,  
'Sons, be welded each and all  
Into one imperial whole,  
One with Britain, heart and soul !  
One life, one flag, one fleet, one  
throne !'  
Britons, hold your own !

## TO W. C. MACREADY

1851

FAREWELL, Macready, since to-night  
we part;  
Full-handed thunders often have  
confessed  
Thy power, well-used to move the  
public breast.  
We thank thee with our voice, and  
from the heart.  
Farewell, Macready, since this night  
we part,  
Go, take thine honors home; rank  
with the best,  
Garriek and statelier Kemble, and  
the rest  
Who made a nation purer through  
their art.  
Thine is it that our drama did not die,  
Nor flicker down to brainless panto-  
mime,  
And those gilt gauds men-children  
swarm to see.  
Farewell, Macready, moral, grave,  
sublime;  
Our Shakespear's bland and univer-  
sal eye  
Dwells pleased, through twice a  
hundred years, on thee.



QUEEN VICTORIA

## DEMETER AND OTHER POEMS

TO THE MARQUIS OF DUF-  
FERIN AND AVA

I

At times our Britain cannot rest,  
At times her steps are swift and  
rash ;  
She moving, at her girdle clash  
The golden keys of East and West.

II

Not swift or rash, when late she lent  
The sceptres of her West, her East,  
To one that ruling has increased  
Her greatness and her self-content.

III

Your rule has made the people love  
Their ruler. Your viceregal days

Have added fulness to the phrase  
Of 'Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

## IV

But since your name will grow with  
time,  
Not all, as honoring your fair fame  
Of Statesman, have I made the  
name  
A golden portal to my rhyme ;

## V

But more, that you and yours may  
know  
From me and mine, how dear a debt  
We owed you, and are owing yet  
To you and yours, and still would  
owe.

## VI

For he — your India was his Fate,  
And drew him over sea to you —  
He fain had ranged her thro' and  
thro',  
To serve her myriads and the State, —

## VII

A soul that, watch'd from earliest  
youth,  
And on thro' many a brightening  
year,  
Had never swerved for craft or fear,  
By one side-path, from simple truth ;

## VIII

Who might have chased and claspt  
Renown  
And caught her chaplet here — and  
there  
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air  
The flame of life went wavering  
down ;

## IX

But ere he left your fatal shore,  
And lay on that funereal boat,  
Dying, 'Unspeakable,' he wrote,  
'Their kindness,' and he wrote no  
more ;

## X

And sacred is the latest word ;  
And now the Was, the Might-have-  
been,  
And those lonerites I have not seen,  
And one drear sound I have not heard,

## XI

Are dreams that scarce will let me be  
Not there to bid my boy farewell,  
When That within the coffin fell,  
Fell — and flash'd into the Red Sea,

## XII

Beneath a hard Arabian moon  
And alien stars. To question why  
The sons before the fathers die,  
Not mine ! and I may meet him soon ;

## XIII

But while my life's late eve endures,  
Nor settles into hueless gray,  
My memories of his briefer day  
Will mix with love for you and yours

## ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

## I

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd and  
faded,  
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,  
Since our Queen assumed the globe,  
the sceptre.

## II

She beloved for a kindliness  
Rare in fable or history,  
Queen, and Empress of India,  
Crown'd so long with a diadem  
Never worn by a worthier,  
Now with prosperous auguries  
Comes at last to the bounteous  
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

## III

Nothing of the lawless, of the despot,  
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglorious,  
All is gracious, gentle, great and  
queenly.

## IV

You then joyfully, all of you,  
Set the mountain aflame to-night,  
Shoot your stars to the firmament,  
Deck your houses, illuminate  
All your towns for a festival,  
And in each let a multitude  
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,  
One full voice of allegiance,  
Hail the fair Ceremonial  
Of this year of her Jubilee.

V

Queen, as true to womanhood as  
Queenhood,  
Glorying in the glories of her people,  
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the  
lowest!

VI

You, that wanton in affluence,  
Spare not now to be bountiful,  
Call your poor to regale with you,  
All the lowly, the destitute,  
Make their neighborhood health-  
fuller,  
Give your gold to the hospital,  
Let the weary be comforted,  
Let the needy be banqueted,  
Let the maim'd in his heart rejoice  
At this glad Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

VII

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,  
Gray with distance Edward's fifty  
summers,  
Even her Grandsire's fifty half forgot-  
ten.

VIII

You, the Patriot Architect,  
You that shape for eternity,  
Raise a stately memorial,  
Make it regally gorgeous,  
Some Imperial Institute,  
Rich in symbol, in ornament,  
Which may speak to the centuries,  
All the centuries after us,  
Of this great Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

IX

Fifty years of ever-broadening Com-  
merce!  
Fifty years of ever-brightening Sci-  
ence!  
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

X

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,  
You, the Lord-territorial,  
You, the Lord-manufacturer,  
You, the hardy, laborious,  
Patient children of Albion,  
You, Canadian, Indian,  
Australasian, African,  
All your hearts be in harmony,

All your voices in unison,  
Singing, 'Hail to the glorious  
Golden year of her Jubilee!'

XI

Are there thunders moaning in the  
distance?  
Are there spectres moving in the dark-  
ness?  
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her  
people,  
Till the thunders pass, the spectres  
vanish,  
And the Light is Victor, and the dark-  
ness  
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

TO PROFESSOR JEBB

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

FAIR things are slow to fade away,  
Bear witness you, that yesterday<sup>1</sup>,  
From out the Ghost of Pindar in  
you  
Roll'd an Olympian; and they say<sup>2</sup>

That here the torpid mummy wheat  
Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet  
As that which gilds the glebe of  
England,  
Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

So may this legend for awhile,  
If greeted by your classic smile,  
Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,  
Blossom again on a colder isle.

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

(IN ENNA)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that  
flies  
All night across the darkness, and at  
dawn  
Falls on the threshold of her native  
land,  
And can no more, thou camest, O my  
child,  
Led upward by the God of ghosts and  
dreams,

<sup>1</sup> In Bologna.

<sup>2</sup> They say, for the fact is doubtful.

Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and dumb  
 With passing thro' at once from state to state,  
 Until I brought thee hither, that the day,  
 When here thy hands let fall the gather'd flower,  
 Might break thro' clouded memories once again<sup>10</sup>  
 On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale  
 Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song  
 And welcome; and a gleam as of the moon,  
 When first she peers along the tremulous deep,  
 Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased away  
 That shadow of a likeness to the king  
 Of shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone!  
 Queen of the dead no more — my child! Thine eyes  
 Again were human-godlike, and the Sun  
 Burst from a swimming fleece of winter gray,  
 And robed thee in his day from head to feet:<sup>20</sup>  
 'Mother!' and I was folded in thine arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd eyes  
 Awed even me at first, thy mother — eyes  
 That oft had seen the serpent-wanded power  
 Draw downward into Hades with his drift  
 Of flickering spectres, lighted from below  
 By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;  
 But when before have Gods or men beheld  
 The Life that had descended re-arise,  
 And lighted from above him by the Sun?<sup>31</sup>  
 So mighty was the mother's childless cry,  
 A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth, and Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,

The field of Enna, now once more ablaze  
 With flowers that brighten as thy footstep falls,  
 All flowers — but for one black blur of earth  
 Left by that closing chasm, thro' which the car  
 Of dark Aidoneus rising rapt thee hence.  
 And here, my child, tho' folded in thine arms,<sup>40</sup>  
 I feel the deathless heart of motherhood  
 Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe  
 Should yawn once more into the gulf, and thence  
 The shrilly whinnings of the team of Hell,  
 Ascending, pierce the glad and songful air,  
 And all at once their arch'd necks, midnight-maned,  
 Jet upward thro' the midday blossom. No!  
 For, see, thy foot has touch'd it; all the space  
 Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself afresh,  
 And breaks into the crocus-purple hour<sup>50</sup>  
 That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,  
 I envied human wives, and nested birds,  
 Yea, the cubb'd lioness; went in search of thee  
 Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and gave  
 Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,  
 And set the mother waking in amaze  
 To find her sick one whole; and forth again  
 Among the wail of midnight winds, and cried,  
 'Where is my loved one? Wherefore do ye wail?'  
 And out from all the night an answer shrill'd,<sup>60</sup>  
 'We know not, and we know not why we wail.'  
 I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,  
 And ask'd the waves that moan about the world,

'Where? do ye make your moaning  
 for my child?'  
 And round from all the world the  
 voices came,  
 'We know not, and we know not why  
 we moan.'  
 'Where?' and I stared from every  
 eagle-peak,  
 I thridded the black heart of all the  
 woods,  
 I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in  
 the storms  
 Of autumn swept across the city, and  
 heard <sup>70</sup>  
 The murmur of their temples chanting  
 me,  
 Me, me, the desolate mother! 'Where?'  
 — and turn'd,  
 And fled by many a waste, forlorn of  
 man,  
 And grieved for man thro' all my grief  
 for thee, —  
 The jungle rooted in his shatter'd  
 hearth,  
 The serpent coil'd about his broken  
 shaft,  
 The scorpion crawling over naked  
 skulls; —  
 I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane  
 Spring from his fallen God, but trace  
 of thee  
 I saw not; and far on, and, following  
 out <sup>80</sup>  
 A league of labyrinthine darkness,  
 came  
 On three gray heads beneath a gleam-  
 ing rift.  
 'Where?' and I heard one voice from  
 all the three,  
 'We know not, for we spin the lives  
 of men,  
 And not of Gods, and know not why  
 we spin!  
 There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing  
 knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying  
 man,  
 Without his knowledge, from him flits  
 to warn  
 A far-off friendship that he comes no  
 more,  
 So he, the God of dreams, who heard  
 my cry, <sup>90</sup>  
 Drew from thyself the likeness of thy-  
 self

Without thy knowledge, and thy  
 shadow past  
 Before me, crying, 'The Bright one in  
 the highest  
 Is brother of the Dark one in the low-  
 est,  
 And Bright and Dark have sworn that  
 I, the child  
 Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee,  
 the Power  
 That lifts her buried life from gloom  
 to bloom,  
 Should be for ever and for evermore  
 The Bride of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wall'd.  
 Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the  
 Gods of heaven. <sup>100</sup>  
 I would not mingle with their feasts;  
 to me  
 Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on  
 the lips,  
 Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.  
 The man, that only lives and loves an  
 hour,  
 Seem'd nobler than their hard eterni-  
 ties.  
 My quick tears kill'd the flower, my  
 ravings hush'd  
 The bird, and lost in utter grief I  
 fail'd  
 To send my life thro' olive-yard and  
 vine  
 And golden-grain, my gift to helpless  
 man.  
 Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-  
 spears <sup>110</sup>  
 Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and  
 the Sun,  
 Pale at my grief, drew down before  
 his time  
 Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter  
 snow.

Then He, the brother of this Dark-  
 ness, He  
 Who still is highest, glancing from his  
 height  
 On earth a fruitless fallow, when he  
 miss'd  
 The wonted steam of sacrifice, the  
 praise  
 And prayer of men, decreed that thou  
 shouldst dwell  
 For nine white moons of each whole  
 year with me.

Three dark ones in the shadow with  
thy king. 120

Once more the reaper in the gleam  
of dawn  
Will see me by the landmark far  
away,  
Blessing his field, or seated in the  
dusk  
Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,  
Rejoicing in the harvest and the  
grange.

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-  
content  
With them who still are highest.  
Those gray heads,  
What meant they by their 'Fate be-  
yond the Fates'  
But younger kindlier Gods to bear us  
down,  
As we bore down the Gods before us?  
Gods, 130  
To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt,  
to stay,  
Not spread the plague, the famine;  
Gods indeed,  
To send the noon into the night and  
break  
The sunless halls of Hades into Hea-  
ven?  
Till thy dark lord accept and love the  
Sun,  
And all the Shadow die into the Light,  
When thou shalt dwell the whole  
bright year with me,  
And souls of men, who grew beyond  
their race,  
And made themselves as Gods against  
the fear  
Of Death and Hell; and thou that  
hast from men, 140  
As Queen of Death, that worship  
which is Fear,  
Henceforth, as having risen from out  
the dead,  
Shalt ever send thy life along with  
mine  
From buried grain thro' springing  
blade, and bless  
Their garner'd autumn also, reap with  
me,  
Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of  
Earth  
The worship which is Love, and see  
no more

The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-glim-  
mering lawns  
Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires  
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior  
glide 150  
Along the silent field of Asphodel.

### OWD ROÄ<sup>1</sup>

NAAÿ, noä mander<sup>2</sup> o' use to be callin'  
'im Roä, Roä, Roä,  
Fur the dog's stoän-deäff, an' 'e's blind,  
'e can naither stan' nor goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd aäge  
as 'appy as iver I can,  
Fur I owäs owd Roäver moor nor I  
iver owäd mottal man.

Thou 's rode of 'is back when a babby,  
afor thou was gotten too owd,  
Fur 'e 'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e  
was allus as good as gowd.

Eh, but 'e 'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e  
fowt; 'e could howd<sup>3</sup> 'is oän,  
An' Roä was the dog as knaw'd when  
an' where to bury his boäne.

An' 'e kep his heäd hoop like a king,  
an' 'e 'd niver not down wi' 'is  
taäil,  
Fur 'e 'd niver done nowt to be  
shaämed on, when we was i'  
Howlaby Daäle. 10

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e  
lived, that, Dick, when 'e cooms  
to be deäd,  
I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom  
soort of a sarvice reäd.

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Par-  
liament man 'at stans fur us  
'ere,  
An' I 'd voät fur 'im, my oän sen, if 'e  
could but stan' for the Shere.

'Faäithful an' True' — them words be  
i' Scriptur — an' Faäithful an'  
True  
Ull be fun' upo' four short legs ten  
times fur one upo' two.

<sup>1</sup> Old Rover.

<sup>3</sup> Hold.

<sup>2</sup> Manner.

<sup>4</sup> Found.

An' maäybe they'll walk upo' two,  
but I knaws they runs upo'  
four,<sup>1</sup>—

Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha  
'eärs it be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when  
we lived i' Howlaby Daäle,

Ten year sin' — Naäy — naäy! tha mun  
nobbut hev' one glass of aäle. 20

Straänge an' owd-farran'd<sup>2</sup> the 'ouse,  
an' belt<sup>3</sup> long afoor my daäy,  
Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd<sup>4</sup>  
an' twined like a band o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs,  
'ud coom at the fall o' the year,  
An' saddle their ends upo' stools to  
pictur the door-poorch there,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds  
stannin' there o' the brokken  
stick;<sup>5</sup>

An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'<sup>6</sup> as  
graw'd hall ower the brick;

An' there i' the 'ouse one night — but  
it's down, an' all on it now  
Goän into mangles an' tonups,<sup>7</sup> an'  
raäved slick thruf by the plow —

There, when the 'ouse wur a house,  
one night I wur sittin' aloän,  
Wi' Roäver athurt my feeät, an'  
sleeäpin' still as a stoän, 30

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowl as  
this, an' the midders<sup>8</sup> as white,  
An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop  
wi' the windle<sup>9</sup> that night;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin' alongside  
Roäver, but I wur awaäke,  
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things —  
Doänt maäke thysen sick wi'  
the caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their  
songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,

<sup>1</sup> ou as in 'house.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned.

<sup>3</sup> Built. <sup>4</sup> 'Twizzen'd,' twisted.

<sup>5</sup> On a staff *ragulé*. <sup>6</sup> Ivy.

<sup>7</sup> Mangolds and turnips.

<sup>8</sup> Meadows. <sup>9</sup> Drifted snow.

An' 'ed goän their waäys; ther was  
nobbut three, an noän on 'em  
there.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the  
Ghoäst an' dussn't not sleeäp i'  
the 'ouse,

But, Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins<sup>1</sup>  
was nobbut a rat or a mouse.

An' I looökt out wonst<sup>2</sup> at the night,  
an' the daäle was all of a thaw,

Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like  
a long black snaäke i' the snaw,

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw  
slushin' down fro' the bank to  
the beck,

An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I  
feeäld it drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o'  
the good owd times 'at was goän,  
An' the munney they maäde by the  
war, an' the times 'at was  
coomin' on;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a-gawin'  
to let in furriners' wheät,  
Howiver was British farmers to stan'  
ageän o' their feeät?

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an'  
to paäy my men?

An' all along o' the feller<sup>3</sup> as turn'd  
'is back of hissen.

Thou slep i' the chaumber above us,  
we could n't ha' 'eärd tha call,  
Sa moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha  
down, an' thy craädle an' all; 50

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi'  
tha then 'ed gotten wer leäve,  
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by  
cause o' the Christmas Eäve;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when  
moother 'ed gotten to bed,  
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an'  
the Freeä Traäde runn'd i' my  
'ead,

<sup>1</sup> 'Moästlins,' for the most part, gener-  
ally.

<sup>2</sup> Once.

<sup>3</sup> Peel.



Till I dream'd 'at Squire walkt in, an'  
I says to him, 'Squire, ya 're  
laäte,'<sup>1</sup>

Then I seed 'at 'is faäce wur as red as  
the Yule-block there i' the  
graäte.

An' 'e says, 'Can ya paäy me the rent  
to-night?' an' I says to 'im,  
'Noä,'<sup>2</sup>

An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm,<sup>1</sup>  
'Then hout to-night tha shall  
goä.'

'Tha 'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin'  
ma hout upo' Christmas Eäve?'

Then I waäked an' I fun it was Roäver  
a-tuggin' an' teärin' my sleäve.

An' I thowt as 'e 'd goän cleän-wud,<sup>2</sup>  
fur I noäwaäys knaw'd 'is in-  
tent;<sup>61</sup>

An' I says, 'Git awaäy, ya beast,' an'  
I fetcht 'im a kick, an' 'e went.

Then 'e tummled up stairs, fur I 'eärd  
'im, as if 'e 'd 'a brokken 'is  
neck,

An' I 'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy  
chaumberdoor would'n't sneck;<sup>3</sup>

An' I slep i' my chair ageän wi' my  
hairm hingin' down to the floor,

An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin'  
an' teärin' me wuss nor afoor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän,  
but I kick'd thy moother istead.

'What arta snorin' theree fur? the  
house is afre,' she said.

Thy moother 'ed beän a-naggin' about  
the gell o' the farm,

She offens 'ud spy summut wrong  
when there warn't not a mossel  
o' harm;<sup>70</sup>

An' she did n't not solidly meän I wur  
gawin' that waäy to the bad,

Fur the gell<sup>4</sup> was as howry a trollope  
as iver traäpes'd i' the squad.

<sup>1</sup> Arm.

<sup>2</sup> Mad.

<sup>3</sup> Latch.

<sup>4</sup> 'The girl was as dirty a slut as ever  
trudged in the mud,' but there is a sense  
of slatternliness in 'traäpes'd' which is  
not expressed in 'trudged.'

But moother was free of 'er tongue,  
as I offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,  
Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she  
was nobbut a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says, 'I 'd be good to tha, Bess,  
if tha'd onywaäys let ma be  
good,'

But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the  
chair, an' screeäd like a howl  
gone wud<sup>1</sup>—

'Ya mun run fur the lether.<sup>2</sup> Git  
oop, if ya 're onywaäys good  
for owt.'

And I says, 'If I beänt noäwaäys  
—not nowadaäys—good fur  
nowt—

'Yit I beänt sich a nowt<sup>3</sup> of all nowts  
as 'ull hallus do as 'e 's bid.'

'But the stairs is afre,' she said; then  
I seed 'er a-cryin', I did. 80

An' she beäld, 'Ya mun saäve little  
Dick, an' be sharp about it an'  
all,'

Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an'  
sets 'im ageän the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder  
hin, when I gits to the top,

But the heät druv hout i' my heyes  
till I feäld mysen ready to drop.

Thy moother was howdin' the lether,  
an' tellin' me not to be skeärd,

An' I was n't afeärd, or I thinks leäst-  
waäys as I was n't afeärd;

But I could'n't see fur the smoäke  
wheree thou was a-liggin, my  
lad,

An' Roäver was theree i' the chaumber  
a-yowlin' an' yaupin' like mad;

An' thou was a-beälin' likewise, an'  
a-squeälin', as if tha was bit,

An' it was n't a bite but a burn, fur the  
merk 's<sup>4</sup> o' thy shou'der yit; 90

<sup>1</sup> 'She half overturned me and shrieked  
like an half gone mad.'

<sup>2</sup> Ladder.

<sup>3</sup> A thoroughly insignificant or worthless  
person.

<sup>4</sup> Mark.

Then I call'd out, 'Roä, Roä, Roä,'  
thaw I did n't haäfe think as 'e  
'd 'ear,

*But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my bairn  
't 'is mouth to the winder there!*

He coom'd like a hangel o' marcy as  
soon as 'e 'eärd 'is naäme,  
Or like tother hangel i' Scriptur 'at  
summun seed i' the flaäme,

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son,  
an' 'e promised a son to she,  
An' Roä was as good as the hangel i'  
saävin' a son fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says, 'I mun  
gaw up ageän fur Roä.'  
'Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?' I  
tell'd 'er, 'Yeäs, I mun goä.'

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the win-  
der, an' clemm'd<sup>1</sup> owd Roä by  
the 'eärd,

An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an' I  
taäked 'im at fust fur deääd; <sup>100</sup>

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein',  
an' seeäm'd as blind as a poop,  
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.<sup>2</sup> I  
could n't wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to  
the barn, fur the barn would n't  
burn

Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy,  
an' the wind was n't like to turn.

An' I kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e wag-  
gled 'is taäil fur a bit,

But the cocks kep a-crawin' an' craw-  
in' all night, an' I 'ears 'em yit;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round,  
and thou was a-squeälin' thyssen,  
An' moother was naggin' an' groänin',  
an' moänin' an' naggin' ageän;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks<sup>3</sup>  
rummle down when the roof  
gev waäy,

Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin'  
an' roarin' like judgment daäy.

Warm enew theere sewer-ly, but the  
barn was as cowl as owt, <sup>111</sup>

An' we cuddled and huddled together,  
an' happt<sup>1</sup> wersens oop as we  
mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but moother  
'ed beän sa soäkk'd wi' the thaw  
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl that  
night, poor soul, i' the straw.

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when  
the rig-tree<sup>2</sup> was tummlin' in —  
Too laäte — but it's all ower now —  
hall hower — an' ten year sin';

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed,  
but I'll coom an' I'll squench  
the light,

Fur we moänt 'ev naw moor fires —  
and soä, little Dick, good-night.

## VASTNESS

## I

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe  
sighs after many a vanish'd  
face,

Many a planet by many a sun may  
roll with the dust of a vanish'd  
race.

## II

Raving politics, never at rest — as this  
poor earth's pale history runs, —

What is it all but a trouble of ants in  
the gleam of a million million  
of suns?

## III

Lies upon this side, lies upon that  
side, truthless violence mourn'd  
by the wise,

Thousands of voices drowning his own  
in a popular torrent of lies upon  
lies;

## IV

Stately purposes, valor in battle, glo-  
rious annals of army and fleet,

Death for the right cause, death for  
the wrong cause, trumpets of  
victory, groans of defeat;

<sup>1</sup> Clutched.

<sup>2</sup> 'Bubbling,' a young unfledged bird.

<sup>3</sup> Beams.

<sup>1</sup> Wrapt ourselves.

<sup>2</sup> The beam that runs along the roof of  
the house just beneath the ridge.

## V

Innocence seethed in her mother's  
milk, and Charity setting the  
martyr aflame;  
Thralldom who walks with the banner  
of Freedom, and recks not to  
ruin a realm in her name.

## VI

Faith at her zenith, er all but lost in  
the gloom of doubts that darken  
the schools;  
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her  
hand, follow'd up by her vassal  
legion of fools;

## VII

Trade flying over a thousand seas with  
her spice and her vintage, her  
silk and her corn;  
Desolate offing, sailorless harbors,  
famishing populace, wharves  
forlorn;

## VIII

Star of the morning, Hope in the sun-  
rise; gloom of the evening, Life  
at a close;  
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide down-  
way with her flying robe and  
her poison'd rose;

## IX

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse  
of Pleasure, a worm which  
writhes all day, and at night  
Stirs up again in the heart of the  
sleeper, and stings him back to  
the curse of the light;

## X

Wealth with his wines and his wedded  
harlots; honest Poverty, bare  
to the bone;  
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty;  
Flattery gilding the rift in a  
throne;

## XI

Fame blowing out from her golden  
trumpet a jubilant challenge to  
Time and to Fate;  
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle  
on all the laurell'd graves of  
the great;

## XII

Love for the maiden, crown'd with  
marriage, no regrets for aught  
that has been,  
Household happiness, gracious chil-  
dren, debless competence, gold-  
en mean;

## XIII

National hatreds of whole generations,  
and pigmy spites of the village  
spire;  
Vows that will last to the last death-  
ruckle, and vows that are snap't  
in a moment of fire;

## XIV

He that has lived for the lust of the  
minute, and died in the doing  
it, flesh without mind;  
He that has nail'd all flesh to the  
Cross, till Self died out in the  
love of his kind;

## XV

Spring and Summer and Autumn and  
Winter, and all these old revo-  
lutions of earth;  
All new-old revolutions of Empire —  
change of the tide — what is all  
of it worth?

## XVI

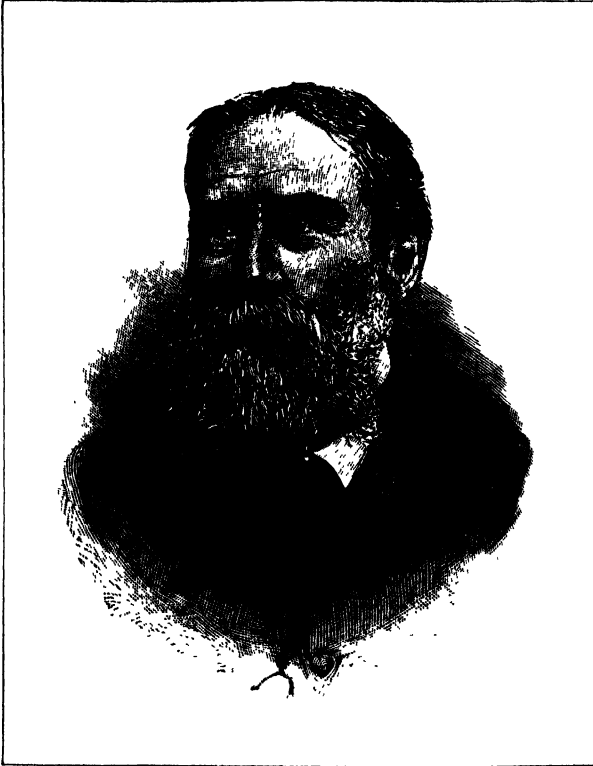
What the philosophies, all the sciences,  
poesy, varying voices of prayer,  
All that is noblest, all that is basest,  
all that is filthy with all that is  
fair?

## XVII

What is it all, if we all of us end but  
in being our own corpse-coffins  
at last?  
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence,  
drown'd in the deeps of a mean-  
ingless Past?

## XVIII

What but a murmur of gnats in the  
gloom, or a moment's anger of  
bees in their hive? —  
Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and  
love him for ever: the dead  
are not dead but alive.



JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

THE RING

Dedicated to the Hon. J. Russell Lowell

MIRIAM AND HER FATHER

MIRIAM (*singing*).

MELLOW moon of heaven,  
Bright in blue,  
Moon of married hearts,  
Hear me, you !

Twelve times in the year  
Bring me bliss,  
Globing honey moons  
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times  
From the night.  
Young again you grow  
Out of sight.

10

Silver crescent-curve,  
Coming soon,  
Globe again, and make  
Honey moon.

Shall not *my* love last,  
Moon, with you,  
For ten thousand years  
Old and new ?

20

FATHER.

And who was he with such love-  
drunken eyes

They made a thousand honey moons  
of one ?

MIRIAM.

The prophet of his own, my Hubert  
— his  
The words, and mine the setting.  
'Air and words,'  
Said Hubert, when I sang the song,  
'are bride  
And bridegroom.' Does it please you ?

FATHER.

Mainly, child,  
Because I hear your mother's voice in  
yours.  
She —, why, you shiver tho' the wind  
is west  
With all the warmth of summer.

MIRIAM.

Well, I felt  
On a sudden I know not what, a  
breath that past 30  
With all the cold of winter.

FATHER (*muttering to himself*).

Even so.  
The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that  
once was Man,  
But cannot wholly free itself from  
Man,  
Are calling to each other thro' a dawn  
Stranger than earth has ever seen;  
the veil  
Is rending, and the Voices of the  
day  
Are heard across the Voices of the  
dark.  
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell,  
for man,  
But thro' the Will of One who knows  
and rules —  
And utter knowledge is but utter  
love — 40  
Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,  
Thro' all the spheres — an ever open-  
ing height,  
An ever lessening earth — and she  
perhaps,  
My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly  
link  
With me to-day.

MIRIAM.

You speak so low; what is it ?

Your 'Miriam breaks' — is making a  
new link  
Breaking an old one ?

FATHER.

No, for we, my child,  
Have been till now each other's all-in-  
all.

MIRIAM.

And you the lifelong guardian of the  
child.

FATHER.

I, and one other whom you have not  
known. 50

MIRIAM.

And who? what other?

FATHER.

Whither are you bound?  
For Naples which we only left in  
May?

MIRIAM.

No, father, Spain, but Hubert brings  
me home  
With April and the swallow. Wish  
me joy!

FATHER.

What need to wish when Hubert weds  
in you  
The heart of love, and you the soul  
of truth  
In Hubert?

MIRIAM.

Tho' you used to call me once  
The lonely maiden princess of the  
wood,  
Who meant to sleep her hundred sum-  
mers out  
Before a kiss should wake her.

FATHER.

Ay, but now  
Your fairy prince has found you, take  
this ring. 60

MIRIAM.

'To t' amo' — and these diamonds —  
beautiful!  
'From Walter,' and for me from you  
then?

FATHER.

Well,  
One way for Miriam.

MIRIAM.

Miriam am I not ?

FATHER.

This ring bequeath'd you by your  
mother, child,  
Was to be given you — such her dying  
wish —  
Given on the morning when you came  
of age  
Or on the day you married. Both the  
days  
Now close in one. The ring is doubly  
yours.  
Why do you look so gravely at the  
tower? 70

MIRIAM.

I never saw it yet so all ablaze  
With creepers crimsoning to the pin-  
nacles,  
As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,  
And all ablaze too in the lake below !  
And how the birds that circle round  
the tower  
Are cheeping to each other of their  
flight  
To summer lands !

FATHER.

And that has made you grave ?  
Fly — care not. Birds and brides must  
leave the nest. 78  
Child, I am happier in your happiness  
Than in mine own.

MIRIAM.

It is not that !

FATHER.

What else ?

MIRIAM.

That chamber in the tower.

FATHER.

What chamber, child ?  
Your nurse is here ?

MIRIAM.

My mother's nurse and mine.  
She comes to dress me in my bridal  
veil. 83

FATHER.

What did she say ?

MIRIAM.

She said that you and I  
Had been abroad for my poor health  
so long  
She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I  
ask'd  
About my mother, and she said, 'Thy  
hair  
Is golden like thy mother's, not so  
fine.'

FATHER.

What then ? what more ?

MIRIAM.

She said — perhaps indeed  
She wander'd, having wander'd now  
so far 90  
Beyond the common date of death —  
that you,  
When I was smaller than the statuette  
Of my dear mother on your bracket  
here —  
You took me to that chamber in the  
tower,  
The topmost — a chest there, by which  
you knelt —  
And there were books and dresses —  
left to me,  
A ring too which you kiss'd, and I,  
she said,  
I babbled, 'Mother, mother' — as I  
used  
To prattle to her picture — stretch'd  
my hands  
As if I saw her; then a woman  
came 100  
And caught me from my nurse. I  
hear her yet —  
A sound of anger like a distant storm.

FATHER.

Garrulous old crone !

MIRIAM.

Poor nurse !

FATHER.

I bade her keep,  
Like a seal'd book, all mention of the  
ring,  
For I myself would tell you all to-day

MIRIAM.

'She too might speak to-day,' she  
mumbled. Still,  
I scarce have learnt the title of your  
book,  
But you will turn the pages.

FATHER.

Ay, to-day!  
I brought you to that chamber on  
your third  
September birthday with your nurse,  
and felt <sup>110</sup>  
An icy breath play on me, while I  
stooped  
To take and kiss the ring.

MIRIAM,

This very ring,  
'Io t' amo?'

FATHER.

Yes, for some wild hope was mine  
That, in the misery of my married  
life,  
Miriam your mother might appear to  
me.  
She came to you, not me. The storm  
you hear  
Far-off is Muriel — your stepmother's  
voice.

MIRIAM.

Vext, that you thought my mother  
came to me?  
Or at my crying, 'Mother'? or to find  
My mother's diamonds hidden from  
her there, <sup>120</sup>  
Like worldly beauties in the cell, not  
shown  
To dazzle all that see them?

FATHER.

Wait a while.  
Your mother and stepmother — Miriam  
Erne  
And Muriel Erne — the two were cou-  
sins — lived  
With Muriel's mother on the down,  
that sees  
A thousand squares of corn and mea-  
dow, far  
As the gray deep, a landscape which  
your eyes  
Have many a time ranged over when  
a babe.

MIRIAM.

I climb'd the hill with Hubert, yester-  
day,  
And from the thousand squares, one  
silent voice <sup>130</sup>  
Came on the wind, and seem'd to say,  
'Again.'  
We saw far off an old forsaken house,  
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

FATHER.

And there  
I found these cousins often by the  
brook,  
For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw  
the fly;  
The girls of equal age, but one was  
fair,  
And one was dark, and both were  
beautiful.  
No voice for either spoke within my  
heart  
Then, for the surface eye, that only  
dotes  
On outward beauty, glancing from the  
one <sup>140</sup>  
To the other, knew not that which  
pleased it most,  
The raven ringlet or the gold; but  
both  
Were dowerless, and myself, I used to  
walk  
This terrace — morbid, melancholy;  
mine  
And yet not mine the hall, the farm,  
the field;  
For all that ample woodland whisper'd,  
'Debt,'  
The brook that feeds this lakelet mur-  
mur'd, 'Debt,'  
And in yon arching avenue of old  
elms,  
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober  
rook <sup>149</sup>  
And carrion crow cry, 'Mortgage.'

MIRIAM.

Father's fault  
Visited on the children!

FATHER.

Ay, but then  
A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to  
Rome —  
He left me wealth — and while I jour-  
ney'd hence,

And saw the world fly by me like a dream,  
 And while I communed with my truest self,  
 I woke to all of truest in myself,  
 Till, in the gleam of those midsummer dawns,  
 The form of Muriel faded, and the face  
 Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew;  
 And past and future mixt in heaven  
 and made <sup>160</sup>  
 The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

MIRIAM.

So glad? no tear for him who left you  
 wealth,  
 Your kinsman?

FATHER.

I had seen the man but once;  
 He loved my name, not me; and then  
 I pass'd  
 Home, and thro' Venice, where a jew-  
 eller,  
 So far gone down, or so far up in life,  
 That he was nearing his own hundred,  
 sold  
 This ring to me, then laugh'd, 'The  
 ring is weird.'  
 And weird and worn and wizard-like  
 was he.  
 'Why weird?' I ask'd him; and he  
 said, 'The souls <sup>170</sup>  
 Of two repentant lovers guard the  
 ring;'  
 Then with a ribald twinkle in his bleak  
 eyes—  
 'And if you give the ring to any maid,  
 They still remember what it cost them  
 here,  
 And bind the maid to love you by the  
 ring;  
 And if the ring were stolen from the  
 maid,  
 The theft were death or madness to  
 the thief,  
 So sacred those ghost lovers hold the  
 gift.'  
 And then he told their legend:  
 'Long ago  
 Two lovers parted by a scurrilous  
 tale  
 Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting  
 sent <sup>181</sup>  
 This ring, "Io t' amo," to his best be-  
 loved,

And sent it on her birthday. She in  
 wrath  
 Return'd it on her birthday, and that  
 day  
 His death-day, when, half-frenzied by  
 the ring,  
 He wildly fought a rival suitor, him  
 The causer of that scandal, fought and  
 fell;  
 And she that came to part them all too  
 late,  
 And found a corpse and silence, drew  
 the ring  
 From his dead finger, wore it till her  
 death, <sup>190</sup>  
 Shrined him within the temple of her  
 heart,  
 Made every moment of her after life  
 A virgin victim to his memory,  
 And dying rose, and rear'd her arms,  
 and cried,  
 "I see him, Io t' amo, Io t' amo."'

MIRIAM.

Legend or true? so tender should be  
 true!  
 Did *he* believe it? did you ask him?

FATHER.

Ay!

But that half skeleton, like a barren  
 ghost  
 From out the fleshless world of spirits,  
 laugh'd—  
 A hollow laughter!

MIRIAM.

Vile, so near the ghost  
 Himself, to laugh at love in death!  
 But you? <sup>201</sup>

FATHER.

Well, as the bygone lover thro' this  
 ring  
 Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I  
 Would call thro' this 'Io t' amo' to the  
 heart  
 Of Miriam; then I bade the man en-  
 grave  
 'From Walter' on the ring, and sent it  
 — wrote  
 Name, surname, all as clear as noon,  
 but he—  
 Some younger hand must have engra-  
 ven the ring—  
 His fingers were so stiffen'd by the frost



Of seven and ninety winters, that he  
 scrawl'd  
 A 'Miriam' that might seem a 'Muriel';<sup>210</sup>  
 And Muriel claim'd and open'd what I  
 meant  
 For Miriam, took the ring, and flaunted  
 it  
 Before that other whom I loved and  
 love.

A mountain stay'd me here, a min-  
 ster there,  
 A galleried palace, or a battle-field,  
 Where stood the sheaf of Peace: but  
 — coming home —  
 And on your mother's birthday — all  
 but yours —  
 A week betwixt — and when the tower  
 as now  
 Was all ablaze with crimson to the  
 roof,<sup>220</sup>  
 And all ablaze too plunging in the lake  
 Head-foremost — who were those that  
 stood between  
 The tower and that rich phantom of  
 the tower?  
 Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and  
 like  
 May-blossoms in mid-autumn — was it  
 they?  
 A light shot upward on them from the  
 lake.  
 What sparkled there? whose hand  
 was that? they stood  
 So close together. I am not keen of  
 sight,  
 But coming nearer — Muriel had the  
 ring —  
 'O Miriam! have you given your ring  
 to her?'<sup>230</sup>  
 O Miriam! Miriam reddened, Muriel  
 clench'd  
 The hand that wore it, till I cried  
 again:  
 'O Miriam, if you love me take the  
 ring!'  
 She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was  
 mute.  
 'Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be.'  
 Then — Muriel standing ever statue-  
 like —  
 She turn'd, and in her soft imperial  
 way  
 And saying gently, 'Muriel, by your  
 leave,'

Unclosed the hand and from it drew  
 the ring,  
 And gave it me, who pass'd it down  
 her own,<sup>240</sup>  
 'To t' amo, all is well then.' Muriel  
 fled.

MIRIAM.

Poor Muriel!

FATHER.

Ay, poor Muriel, when you hear  
 What follows! Miriam loved me from  
 the first,  
 Not thro' the ring; but on her mar-  
 riage-morn  
 This birthday, death-day, and be-  
 trothal ring,  
 Laid on her table overnight, was gone;  
 And after hours of search and doubt  
 and threats,  
 And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it,  
 'See! —  
 Found in a chink of that old moul-  
 der'd floor!'  
 My Miriam nodded with a pitying  
 smile,<sup>250</sup>  
 As who should say that 'those who  
 lose can find.'  
 Then I and she were married for a  
 year,  
 One year without a storm, or even a  
 cloud;  
 And you, my Miriam, born within the  
 year;  
 And she, my Miriam, dead within the  
 year.  
 I sat beside her dying, and she  
 gaspt:  
 'The books, the miniature, the lace  
 are hers,  
 My ring too when she comes of age,  
 or when  
 She marries; you — you loved me,  
 kept your word.  
 You love me still, "To t' amo." —  
 Muriel — no —<sup>260</sup>  
 She cannot love; she loves her own  
 hard self,  
 Her firm will, her fix'd purpose. Pro-  
 mise me,  
 Miriam, not Muriel — she shall have  
 the ring.'  
 And there the light of other life, which  
 lives  
 Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,

Gleam'd for a moment in her own on earth.

I swore the vow, then with my latest kiss

Upon them, closed her eyes, which would not close,

But kept their watch upon the ring and you.

Your birthday was her death-day.

MIRIAM.

O poor mother !  
And you, poor desolate father, and  
poor me, <sup>271</sup>

The little senseless, worthless, word-  
less babe,

Saved when your life was wreck'd !

FATHER.

Desolate ? yes !

Desolate as that sailor whom the  
storm

Had parted from his comrade in the  
boat,

And dash'd half dead on barren sands,  
was I.

Nay, you were my one solace ; only  
— you

Were always ailing. Muriel's mo-  
ther, sent,

And sure am I, by Muriel, one day  
came

And saw you, shook her head, and  
patted yours, <sup>280</sup>

And smiled, and making with a kindly  
pinch

Each poor pale cheek a momentary  
rose —

'That should be fix'd,' she said ; ' your  
pretty bud,

So blighted here, would flower into  
full health

Among our heath and bracken. Let  
her come !

And we will feed her with our moun-  
tain air,

And send her home to you rejoicing.'  
No —

We could not part. And once, when  
you, my girl,

Rode on my shoulder home — the tiny  
fist

Had graspt a daisy from your mo-  
ther's grave — <sup>290</sup>

By the lych-gate was Muriel. 'Ay,'  
she said,

'Among the tombs in this damp vale  
of yours !

You scorn my mother's warning, but  
the child

Is paler than before. We often walk  
In open sun, and see beneath our

feet  
The mist of autumn gather from your  
lake,

And shroud the tower ; and once we  
only saw

Your gilded vane, a light above the  
mist' —

Our old bright bird that still is veer-  
ing there

Above his four gold letters — 'and the  
light,' <sup>300</sup>

She said, 'was like that light' — and  
there she paused,

And long ; till I, believing that the  
girl's

Lean fancy, groping for it, could not  
find

One likeness, laugh'd a little and found  
her two —

'A warrior's crest above the cloud of  
war' —

'A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,  
The pyre he burnt in.' — 'Nay,' she

said, 'the light  
That glimmers on the marsh and on

the grave.'

And spoke no more, but turn'd and  
past away.

Miriam, I am not surely one of those  
Caught by the flower that closes on

the fly, <sup>311</sup>

But after ten slow weeks her fix'd in-  
tent,

In aiming at an all but hopeless mark  
To strike it, struck. I took, I left

you there ;  
I came, I went, was happier day by  
day ;

For Muriel nursed you with a mo-  
ther's care ;

Till on that clear and heather-scented  
height

The rounder cheek had brighten'd into  
bloom.

She always came to meet me carrying  
you,

And all her talk was of the babe she  
loved ; <sup>320</sup>

So, following her old pastime of the  
brook,

She threw the fly for me; but oftener  
     left  
 That angling to the mother. 'Muriel's health  
 Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam.  
     Strange!  
 She used to shun the wailing babe,  
     and dotes  
 On this of yours.' But when the ma-  
     tron saw  
 That hinted love was only wasted  
     bait,  
 Not risen to, she was bolder. 'Ever  
     since  
 You sent the fatal ring' — I told her  
     'sent  
 To Miriam,' 'Doubtless — ay, but ever  
     since <sup>330</sup>  
 In all the world my dear one sees but  
     you —  
 In your sweet babe she finds but you  
     — she makes  
 Her heart a mirror that reflects but  
     you.'  
 And then the tear fell, the voice broke.  
     *Her heart!*  
 I gazed into the mirror, as a man  
 Who sees his face in water, and a  
     stone,  
 That glances from the bottom of the  
     pool,  
 Strike upward thro' the shadow; yet  
     at last,  
 Gratitude — loneliness — desire to keep  
 So skilled a nurse about you always  
     — nay! <sup>340</sup>  
 Some half remorseful kind of pity  
     too —  
 Well! well, you know I married Mu-  
     riel Erne.  
 'I take thee Muriel for my wedded  
     wife' —  
 I had forgotten it was your birthday,  
     child —  
 When all at once with some electric  
     thrill  
 A cold air pass'd between us, and the  
     hands  
 Fell from each other, and were join'd  
     again.  
 No second cloudless honeymoon was  
     mine.  
 For by and by she sicken'd of the  
     farce,  
 She dropt the gracious mask of mo-  
     therhood, <sup>350</sup>

She came no more to meet me, carry  
     ing you,  
 Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,  
 Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,  
 Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly  
     smile,  
 Nor ever ceased to clamor for the  
     ring;  
 Why had I sent the ring at first to  
     her?  
 Why had I made her love 'me thro' the  
     ring,  
 And then had changed? so fickle are  
     men — the best!  
 Not she — but now my love was hers  
     again,  
 The ring by right, she said, was hers  
     again. <sup>360</sup>  
 At times too shrilling in her angrier  
     moods,  
 'That weak and watery nature love  
     you? No!  
 "Io t' amo, Io t' amo"!' I flung her-  
     self  
 Against my heart, but often while her  
     lips  
 Were warm upon my cheek, an icy  
     breath,  
 As from the grating of a sepulchre,  
 Past over both. I told her of my vow,  
 No pliable idiot I to break my vow;  
 But still she made her outcry for the  
     ring;  
 For one monotonous fancy madden'd  
     her, <sup>370</sup>  
 Till I myself was madden'd with her  
     cry,  
 And even that 'Io t' amo,' those three  
     sweet  
 Italian words, became a weariness.  
 My people too were scared with  
     eerie sounds,  
 A footstep, a low throbbing in the  
     walls,  
 A noise of falling weights that never  
     fell,  
 Weird whispers, bells that rang with-  
     out a hand,  
 Door-handles turn'd when none was  
     at the door,  
 And bolted doors that open'd of them-  
     selves;  
 And one betwixt the dark and light  
     had seen <sup>380</sup>  
*Her*, bending by the cradle of her  
     babe.

MIRIAM.

And I remember once that being waked  
 By noises in the house—and no one  
 near—  
 I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle  
 hand  
 Fall on my forehead, and a sudden  
 face  
 Look'd in upon me like a gleam and  
 pass'd,  
 And I was quieted, and slept again.  
 Or is it some half memory of a dream?

FATHER.

Your fifth September birthday.

MIRIAM.

And the face,  
 The hand,—my mother.

FATHER.

Miriam, on that day  
 Two lovers parted by no scurrilous  
 tale—  
 Mere want of gold—and still for  
 twenty years  
 Bound by the golden cord of their  
 first love—  
 Had ask'd us to their marriage, and  
 to share  
 Their marriage-banquet. Muriel, paler  
 then  
 Than ever you were in your cradle,  
 moan'd,  
 'I am fitter for my bed, or for my  
 grave,  
 I cannot go, go you.' And then she  
 rose,  
 She clung to me with such a hard em-  
 brace,  
 So lingeringly long, that half-amazed  
 I parted from her, and I went alone.  
 And when the bridegroom murmur'd,  
 'With this ring,'  
 I felt for what I could not find, the  
 key,  
 The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.  
 I kept it as a sacred amulet  
 About me,—gone! and gone in that  
 embrace!  
 Then, hurrying home, I found her  
 not in house  
 Or garden—up the tower—an icy  
 air  
 Fled by me.—There, the chest was  
 open—all

The sacred relics tost about the  
 floor—  
 Among them Muriel lying on her  
 face—  
 I raised her, call'd her, 'Muriel, Mu-  
 riel, wake!'  
 The fatal ring lay near her; the glazed  
 eye  
 Glared at me as in horror. Dead! I  
 took  
 And chafed the freezing hand. A red  
 mark ran  
 All round one finger pointed straight,  
 the rest  
 Were crumpled inwards. Dead!—  
 and maybe stung  
 With some remorse, had stolen, worn  
 the ring—  
 Then torn it from her finger, or as  
 if—  
 For never had I seen her show re-  
 morse  
 As if—

MIRIAM.

—those two ghost lovers—

FATHER.

Lovers yet—

MIRIAM.

Yes, yes!

FATHER.

—but dead so long, gone up so far,  
 That now their ever-rising life has  
 dwarf'd  
 Or lost the moment of their past on  
 earth,  
 As we forget our wail at being born—  
 As if—

MIRIAM.

—a dearer ghost had—

FATHER.

—wrench'd it away.

MIRIAM.

Had floated in with sad reproachful  
 eyes,  
 Till from her own hand she had torn  
 the ring  
 In fright, and fallen dead. And I  
 myself  
 Am half afraid to wear it.

## FATHER.

Well, no more!  
 No bridal music this! but fear not  
 you! 431  
 You have the ring she guarded; that  
 poor link  
 With earth is broken, and has left her  
 free,  
 Except that, still drawn downward  
 for an hour,  
 Her spirit hovering by the church,  
 where she  
 Was married too, may linger, till she  
 sees  
 Her maiden coming like a queen, who  
 leaves  
 Some colder province in the North to  
 gain  
 Her capital city, where the loyal bells  
 Clash welcome—linger, till her own,  
 the babe 440  
 She lean'd to from her spiritual sphere,  
 Her lonely maiden princess, crowned  
 with flowers,  
 Has enter'd on the larger woman-world  
 Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil—  
 Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me,  
 child, and go.

## FORLORN

## I

'HE is fled—I wish him dead—  
 He that wrought my ruin—  
 O, the flattery and the craft  
 Which were my undoing—  
 In the night, in the night,  
 When the storms are blowing.

## II

'Who was witness of the crime?  
 Who shall now reveal it?  
 He is fled, or he is dead,  
 Marriage will conceal it— 10  
 In the night, in the night,  
 While the gloom is growing.'

## III

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,  
 What is this you're dreaming?  
 There is laughter down in hell  
 At your simple scheming—  
 In the night, in the night,  
 When the ghosts are fleeing.

## IV

You to place a hand in his  
 Like an honest woman's, 28  
 You that lie with wasted lungs  
 Waiting for your summons—  
 In the night, O, the night!  
 O, the deathwatch beating!

## V

There will come a witness soon  
 Hard to be confuted,  
 All the world will hear a voice  
 Scream you are polluted—  
 In the night! O, the night,  
 When the owls are wailing! 30

## VI

Shame and marriage, shame and mar-  
 riage,  
 Fright and foul dissembling,  
 Bantering bridesman, reddening priest,  
 Tower and altar trembling—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 When the mind is failing!

## VII

Mother, dare you kill your child?  
 How your hand is shaking!  
 Daughter of the seed of Cain,  
 What is this you're taking?— 40  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 While the house is sleeping.

## VIII

Dreadful! has it come to this,  
 O unhappy creature?  
 You that would not tread on a worm  
 For your gentle nature—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 O, the night of weeping!

## IX

Murder would not veil your sin,  
 Marriage will not hide it, 50  
 Earth and Hell will brand your name,  
 Wretch, you must abide it—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 Long before the dawning.

## X

Up, get up, and tell him all,  
 Tell him you were lying!  
 Do not die with a lie in your mouth,  
 You that know you're dying—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 While the grave is yawning. 60

## XI

No—you will not die before,  
 Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger;  
 You will live till *that* is born,  
 Then a little longer —  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 While the Fiend is prowling.

## XII

Death and marriage, death and marriage!  
 Funeral hearses rolling!  
 Black with bridal favors mixt!  
 Bridal bells with tolling! — 70  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 When the wolves are howling.

## XIII

Up, get up, the time is short,  
 Tell him now or never!  
 Tell him all before you die,  
 Lest you die for ever —  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 Where there's no forgetting.

## XIV

Up she got, and wrote him all,  
 All her tale of sadness, 80  
 Blister'd every word with tears,  
 And eased her heart of madness —  
 In the night, and nigh the dawn,  
 And while the moon was setting.

## HAPPY

## THE LEPER'S BRIDE

## I

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and  
 what is it that you fear?  
 Is he sick, your mate, like mine?  
 have you lost him, is he fled?  
 And there — the heron rises from his  
 watch beside the mere,  
 And flies above the leper's hut,  
 where lives the living-dead.

## II

Come back, nor let me know it! would  
 he live and die alone?  
 And has he not forgiven me yet, his  
 over-jealous bride,  
 Who am, and was, and will be his,  
 his own and only own,  
 To share his living death with him,  
 die with him side by side?

## III

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary  
 moor,  
 Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn,  
 and wears the leper's weed? 10  
 The door is open. He! is he standing  
 at the door,  
 My soldier of the Cross? it is he,  
 and he indeed!

## IV

My roses — will he take them *now* --  
 mine, his — from off the tree  
 We planted both together, happy in  
 our marriage morn?  
 O God, I could blaspheme, for he  
 fought Thy fight for Thee,  
 And Thou hast made him leper to  
 compass him with scorn —

## V

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the  
 coward and the base,  
 And set a crueller mark than Cain's  
 on him, the good and brave!  
 He sees me, waves me from him. I  
 will front him face to face.  
 You need not wave me from you.  
 I would leap into your grave. 20  
 . . . . .

## VI

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of  
 the conquering sword,  
 The roses that you cast aside — once  
 more I bring you these.  
 No nearer? do you scorn me when  
 you tell me, O my lord,  
 You would not mar the beauty of  
 your bride with your disease?

## VII

You say your body is so foul — then  
 here I stand apart,  
 Who yearn to lay my loving head  
 upon your leprous breast.  
 The leper plague may scale my skin,  
 but never taint my heart;  
 Your body is not foul to me, and  
 body is foul at best.

## VIII

I loved you first when young and fair,  
 but now I love you most;  
 The fairest flesh at last is filth on  
 which the worm will feast; 30

This poor rib-grated dungeon of the  
holy human ghost,  
This house with all its hateful needs  
no cleaner than the beast,

## IX

This coarse diseaseful creature which  
in Eden was divine,  
This Satan-haunted ruin, this little  
city of sewers,  
This wall of solid flesh that comes be-  
tween your soul and mine,  
Will vanish and give place to the  
beauty that endures,

## X

The beauty that endures on the Spirit-  
ual height,  
When we shall stand transfigured,  
like Christ on Hermon hill,  
And moving each to music, soul in  
soul and light in light,  
Shall flash thro' one another in a  
moment as we will. 40

## XI

Foul ! foul ! the word was yours not  
mine, I worship that right hand  
Which fell'd the foes before you as  
the woodman fells the wood,  
And sway'd the sword that lighten'd  
back the sun of Holy Land,  
And clove the Moslem crescent  
moon, and changed it into blood.

## XII

And once I worshipt all too well this  
creature of decay,  
For age will chink the face, and  
death will freeze the supplest  
limbs —  
Yet you in your mid manhood — O,  
the grief when yesterday  
They bore the Cross before you to  
the chant of funeral hymns !

## XIII

Libera me, Domine !' you sang the  
Psalm, and when  
The priest pronounced you dead,  
and flung the mould upon your  
feet, 50  
A beauty came upon your face, not  
that of living men,  
But seen upon the silent brow when  
life has ceased to beat.

## XIV

' Libera nos, Domine ' — you knew not  
one was there  
Who saw you kneel beside your  
bier, and weeping scarce could  
see ;  
May I come a little nearer, I that  
heard, and changed the prayer  
And sang the married ' nos ' for the  
solitary ' me ' ?

## XV

*My* beauty marred by you ? by you !  
so be it. All is well  
If I lose it and myself in the higher  
beauty, yours.  
*My* beauty lured that falcon from his  
eyry on the fell,  
Who never caught one gleam of the  
beauty which endures — 60

## XVI

The Count who sought to snap the  
bond that link'd us life to life,  
Who whisper'd me, ' Your Ulric  
loves ' — a little nearer still —  
He hiss'd, ' Let us revenge ourselves,  
your Ulric woos my wife ' —  
A lie by which he thought he could  
subdue me to his will.

## XVII

I knew that you were near me when  
I let him kiss my brow ;  
*Did* he touch me on the lips ? I was  
jealous, anger'd, vain,  
And I meant to make *you* jealous. Are  
you jealous of me now ?  
Your pardon, O my love, if I ever  
gave you pain !

## XVIII

You never once accused me, but I  
wept alone, and sigh'd  
In the winter of the present for the  
summer of the past ; 70  
That icy winter silence — how it froze  
you from your bride,  
Tho' I made one barren effort to  
break it at the last !

## XIX

I brought you, you remember, these  
roses, when I knew  
You were waiting for the war, and  
you took them tho' you frown'd ;

You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them.  
 All at once the trumpet blew,  
 And you spurr'd your fiery horse,  
 and you hurl'd them to the  
 ground.

## XX

You parted for the Holy War without  
 a word to me,  
 And clear myself unask'd—not I.  
 My nature was too proud.  
 And him I saw but once again, and  
 far away was he,  
 When I was praying in a storm—  
 the crash was long and loud—

## XXI

That God would ever slant His bolt  
 from falling on your head—  
 Then I lifted up my eyes, he was  
 coming down the fell—  
 I clapt my hands. The sudden fire  
 from heaven had dash'd him  
 dead,  
 And sent him char'd and blasted to  
 the deathless fire of hell.

## XXII

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I re-  
 pent and repent,  
 And trust myself forgiven by the  
 God to whom I kneel.  
 A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly  
 be content  
 Till I be leper like yourself, my  
 love, from head to heel.

## XXIII

O foolish dreams, that you, that I,  
 would slight our marriage oath!  
 I held you at that moment even  
 dearer than before;  
 Now God has made you leper in His  
 loving care for both,  
 That we might cling together, never  
 doubt each other more.

## XXIV

The priest, who join'd you to the  
 dead, has join'd our hands of  
 old;  
 If man and wife be but one flesh,  
 let mine be leprous too,

As dead from all the human race as if  
 beneath the mould;  
 If you be dead, then I am dead,  
 who only live for you.

## XXV

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be  
 follow'd by the Moon?  
 The leech forsake the dying bed for  
 terror of his life?  
 The shadow leave the Substance in  
 the brooding light of noon?  
 Or if I had been the leper would  
 you have left the wife? 100

## XXVI

Not take them? Still you wave me  
 off—poor roses—must I go—  
 I have worn them year by year—  
 from the bush we both had  
 set—  
 What? fling them to you?—well—  
 that were hardly gracious. No!  
 Your plague but passes by the  
 touch. A little nearer yet!

## XXVII

There, there! he buried you, the  
 priest; the priest is not to  
 blame,  
 He joins us once again, to his either  
 office true.  
 I thank him. I am happy, happy.  
 Kiss me. In the name  
 Of the everlasting God, I will live  
 and die with you!

[Dean Milman has remarked that the pro-  
 tection and care afforded by the Church to  
 this blighted race of lepers was among the  
 most beautiful of its offices during the Mid-  
 dle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth  
 and fourteenth centuries was supposed to  
 be a legacy of the Crusades, but was in all  
 probability the offspring of meagre and un-  
 wholesome diet, miserable lodging and  
 clothing, physical and moral degradation.  
 The services of the Church in the seclusion  
 of these unhappy sufferers were most af-  
 fecting. The stern duty of looking to the  
 public welfare is tempered with exquisite  
 compassion for the victims of this loath-  
 some disease. The ritual for the sequestra-  
 tion of the leprous differed little from the  
 burial service. After the leper had been  
 sprinkled with holy water, the priest con-



ducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm 'Libera me, Domine,' and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions: 'I forbid you entering the church . . . or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress.' He concluded: 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual follow these sad words: 'When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard.' At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprous, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage-tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's 'Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography' will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, Saint Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds. — BOURCHIER-JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi*-burial varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

## TO ULYSSES

### I

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,  
Whose eyes have known this globe  
of ours,  
Her tribes of men, and trees, and  
flowers,  
From Corrientes to Japan,

### II

To you that bask below the Line,  
I soaking here in winter wet —  
The century's three strong eights  
have met  
To drag me down to seventy-nine

### III

In summer if I reach my day —  
To you, yet young, who breathe the  
balm  
Of summer-winters by the palm  
And orange grove of Paraguay,

### IV

I, tolerant of the colder time,  
Who love the winter woods, to trace  
On paler heavens the branching  
grace  
Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

### V

And see my cedar green, and there  
My giant ilex keeping leaf  
When frost is keen and days are  
brief —  
Or marvel how in English air

### VI

My yucca, which no winter quells,  
Altho' the months have scarce be-  
gun,  
Has push'd toward our faintest sun  
A spike of half-accomplish'd bells —

### VII

Or watch the waving pine which here  
The warrior of Capra set,<sup>1</sup>  
A name that earth will not forget  
Till earth has roll'd her latest year —

### VIII

I, once half-crazed for larger light  
On broader zones beyond the foam,  
But chaining fancy now at home  
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

### IX

Not less would yield full thanks to you  
For your rich gift, your tale of lands  
I know not,<sup>2</sup> your Arabian sands;  
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bam-  
boo,

<sup>1</sup> Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, 'I wish I had your trees.'

<sup>2</sup> The tale of Nejd.

## X

The wealth of tropic bower and brake ;  
 Your Oriental Eden-isles,<sup>1</sup>  
 Where man, nor only Nature smiles ;  
 Your wonder of the boiling lake ;<sup>2</sup>

## XI

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,<sup>3</sup>  
 Phra-bat<sup>4</sup> the step ; your Pontic  
 coast ;  
 Crag-cloister ;<sup>5</sup> Anatolian Ghost ;<sup>6</sup>  
 Hong-Kong,<sup>7</sup> Karnac,<sup>8</sup> and all the  
 rest ;

## XII

Thro' which I follow'd line by line  
 Your leading hand, and came, my  
 friend,  
 To prize your various book, and  
 send  
 A gift of slenderer value, mine.

## TO MARY BOYLE

## WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

## I

'SPRING-FLOWERS' ! While you still  
 delay to take  
 Your leave of town,  
 Our elm-tree's ruddy-hearted blossom-  
 flake  
 Is fluttering down.

## II

Be truer to your promise. There ! I  
 heard  
 Our cuckoo call.  
 Be needle to the magnet of your word,  
 Nor wait, till all

<sup>1</sup> The Philippines.      <sup>2</sup> In Dominica.

<sup>3</sup> The Shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

<sup>4</sup> The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

<sup>5</sup> The monastery of Sumelas.

<sup>6</sup> Anatolian spectre stories.

<sup>7</sup> The three cities.

<sup>8</sup> Travels in Egypt.

## III

Our vernal bloom from every vale and  
 plain  
 And garden pass,  
 And all the gold from each laburnum  
 chain  
 Drop to the grass.

## IV

Is memory with your Marian gone to  
 rest,  
 Dead with the dead ?  
 For ere she left us, when we met, you  
 prest  
 My hand, and said

## V

'I come with your spring-flowers.'  
 You came not, friend ;  
 My birds would sing,  
 You heard not. Take then this spring  
 flower I send,  
 This song of spring,

## VI

Found yesterday — forgotten mine  
 own rhyme  
 By mine old self,  
 As I shall be forgotten by old Time,  
 Laid on the shelf —

## VII

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the  
 whitening sloe  
 And kingcup blaze,  
 And more than half a hundred years  
 ago,  
 In rick-fire days,

## VIII

When Dives loathed the times, and  
 paced his land  
 In fear of worse,  
 And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant  
 hand  
 Fill with *his* purse.

## IX

For lowly minds were madden'd to the  
 height  
 By tonguester tricks,  
 And once — I well remember that red  
 night  
 When thirty ricks,

## X

All flaming, made an English home-  
stead hell —  
These hands of mine  
Have helpt to pass a bucket from the  
well  
Along the line,

## XI

When this bare dome had not begun  
to gleam  
Thro' youthful curls,  
And you were then a lover's fairy  
dream,  
His girl of girls ;

## XII

And you, that now are lonely, and  
with Grief  
Sit face to face,  
Might find a flickering glimmer of re-  
lief  
In change of place.

## XIII

What use to brood ? This life of min-  
gled pains  
And joys to me,  
Despite of every Faith and Creed, re-  
mains  
The Mystery.

## XIV

Let golden youth bewail the friend,  
the wife,  
For ever gone.  
He dreams of that long walk thro' de-  
sert life  
Without the one.

## XV

The silver year should cease to mourn  
and sigh —  
Not long to wait —  
So close are we, dear Mary, you and I,  
To that dim gate.

## XVI

Take, read ! and be the faults your  
Poet makes  
Or many or few,  
He rests content, if his young music  
wakes  
A wish in you

## XVII

To change our dark Queen-city, all her  
realm  
Of sound and smoke,  
For his clear heaven, and these few  
lanes of elm  
And whispering oak.

## THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

## I

THE ground-flame of the crocus breaks  
the mould,  
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the  
Southern sea,  
Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop  
cold  
That trembles not to kisses of the  
bee.  
Come, Spring, for now from all the  
dripping eaves  
The spear of ice has wept itself  
away,  
And hour by hour unfolding woodbine  
leaves  
O'er his uncertain shadow droops  
the day.  
She comes ! The loosen'd rivulets  
run ;  
The frost-bead melts upon her golden  
hair ;  
Her mantle, slowly greening in the  
Sun,  
Now wraps her close, now arching  
leaves her bare  
To breaths of balmier air ;

## II

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to wel-  
come her,  
About her glance the tits, and shriek  
the jays,  
Before her skims the jubilant wood-  
pecker,  
The linnet's bosom blushes at her  
gaze,  
While round her brows a woodland  
culver flits,  
Watching her large light eyes and  
gracious looks,  
And in her open palm a halcyon  
sits  
Patient — the secret splendor of the  
brooks.

Come, Spring! She comes on waste  
 and wood,  
 On farm and field; but enter also  
 here,  
 Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my  
 blood,  
 And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,  
 Lodge with me all the year!

## III

Once more a downy drift against the  
 brakes,  
 Self-darken'd in the sky, descending  
 slow!  
 But gladly see I thro' the wavering  
 flakes  
 Yon blanching apricot like snow in  
 snow.  
 These will thine eyes not brook in<sup>30</sup>  
 forest-paths,  
 On their perpetual pine, nor round  
 the beech;

They fuse themselves to little spicy  
 baths,  
 Solved in the tender blushes of the  
 peach;  
 They lose themselves and die  
 On that new life that gems the  
 hawthorn line;  
 Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them  
 by,  
 And out once more in varnish'd  
 glory shine  
 Thy stars of celandine.

## IV

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven  
 lours,  
 But in the tearful splendor of her<sup>40</sup>  
 smiles  
 I see the slowly-thickening chestnut  
 towers  
 Fill out the spaces by the barren  
 tiles.



'She comes on waste and wood,  
 On farm and field'

Now past her feet the swallow circling  
flies,  
A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet  
her hand;  
Her light makes rainbows in my clos-  
ing eyes,  
I hear a charm of song thro' all the  
land.  
Come, Spring! She comes, and Earth  
is glad  
To roll her North below thy deep-  
ening dome,  
But ere thy maiden birk be wholly  
clad,  
And these low bushes dip their  
twigs in foam,  
Make all true hearths thy home.

## V

Across my garden! and the thicket  
stirs,  
The fountain pulses high in sunnier  
jets,  
The blackcap warbles, and the turtle  
purrs,  
The starling claps his tiny casta-  
nets.  
Still round her forehead wheels the  
woodland dove,  
And scatters on her throat the sparks  
of dew,  
The kingcup fills her footprint, and  
above  
Broaden the glowing isles of vernal  
blue.  
Hail, ample presence of a Queen,  
Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,  
Whose mantle, every shade of glan-  
cing green,  
Flies in fragrant breezes to  
display  
A tunic white as May!

## VI

She whispers, 'From the South I bring  
you balm,  
For on a tropic mountain was I  
born,  
While some dark dweller by the coco-  
palm  
Watch'd my far meadow zoned with  
airy morn;  
From under rose a muffled moan of  
floods;  
I sat beneath a solitude of snow;

There no one came, the turf was  
fresh, the woods  
Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their  
vales below.  
I saw beyond their silent tops  
The steaming marshes of the scarlet  
cranes,  
The slant seas leaning on the man-  
grove copse,  
And summer basking in the sultry  
plains  
About a land of canes.

## VII

'Then from my vapor-girdle soaring  
forth  
I scaled the buoyant highway of  
the birds,  
And drank the dews and drizzle of  
the North,  
That I might mix with men, and  
hear their words  
On pathway'd plains; for—while my  
hand exults  
Within the bloodless heart of lowly  
flowers  
To work old laws of Love to fresh  
results,  
Thro' manifold effect of simple  
powers—  
I too would teach the man  
Beyond the darker hour to see the  
bright,  
That his fresh life may close as it be-  
gan,  
The still-fulfilling promise of a light  
Narrowing the bounds of night.'

## VIII

So wed thee with my soul, that I may  
mark  
The coming year's great good and  
varied ill,  
And new developments, whatever  
spark  
Be struck from out the clash of  
warring wills;  
Or whether, since our nature cannot  
rest,  
The smoke of war's volcano burst  
again  
From hoary depths that belt the change-  
ful West,  
Old Empires, dwellings of the kings  
of men;

Or should those fail that hold the  
helm,  
While the long day of knowledge  
grows and warms,  
And in the heart of this most ancient  
realm  
A hateful voice be utter'd, and  
alarms  
Sounding 'To arms! to arms!'

## IX

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn  
Who reads thy gradual process,  
Holy Spring.  
Thy leaves possess the season in their  
turn,  
And in their time thy warblers rise  
on wing.  
How surely glidest thou from March  
to May,  
And changest, breathing it, the sul-  
len wind,  
Thy scope of operation, day by day,  
Larger and fuller, like the human  
mind!  
Thy warmths from bud to bud  
Accomplish that blind model in the  
seed,  
And men have hopes, which race the  
restless blood,  
That after many changes may suc-  
ceed  
Life which is Life indeed.

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

## I

O young Mariner,  
You from the haven  
Under the sea-cliff,  
You that are watching  
The gray Magician  
With eyes of wonder,  
I am Merlin,  
And I am dying,  
I am Merlin  
Who follow the Gleam.

## II

Mighty the Wizard  
Who found me at sunrise  
Sleeping, and woke me  
And learn'd me Magic!

Great the Master,  
And sweet the Magic,  
When over the valley,  
In early summers,  
Over the mountain,  
On human faces,  
And all around me,  
Moving to melody,  
Floated the Gleam.

## III

Once at the croak of a Raven who  
crost it,  
A barbarous people,  
Blind to the magic  
And deaf to the melody,  
Snarl'd at and curs'd me.  
A demon vext me,  
The light retreated,  
The landskip darken'd,  
The melody deaden'd,  
The Master whisper'd,  
'Follow the Gleam.'

## IV

Then to the melody,  
Over a wilderness  
Gliding, and glancing at  
Elf of the woodland,  
Gnome of the cavern,  
Griffin and Giant,  
And dancing of Fairies  
In desolate hollows,  
And wraiths of the mountain,  
And rolling of dragons  
By warble of water,  
Or cataract music  
Of falling torrents,  
Flitted the Gleam.

## V

Down from the mountain  
And over the level,  
And streaming and shining on  
Silent river,  
Silvery willow,  
Pasture and plowland,  
Innocent maidens,  
Garrulous children,  
Homestead and harvest,  
Reaper and gleaner,  
And rough-ruddy faces  
Of lowly labor,  
Slided the Gleam —

## VI

Then, with a melody  
Stronger and statelier,  
Led me at length  
To the city and palace  
Of Arthur the King ;  
Touch'd at the golden  
Cross of the churches,  
Flash'd on the tournament,  
Flicker'd and bicker'd  
From helmet to helmet,  
And last on the forehead  
Of Arthur the blameless  
Rested the Gleam.

## VII

Clouds and darkness  
Closed upon Camelot ;  
Arthur had vanish'd  
I knew not whither,  
The king who loved me,  
And cannot die ;  
For out of the darkness  
Silent and slowly  
The Gleam, that had waned to a win-  
try glimmer  
On icy fallow  
And faded forest,  
Drew to the valley  
Named of the shadow,  
And slowly brightening  
Out of the glimmer,  
And slowly moving again to a melody  
Yearningly tender,  
Fell on the shadow,  
No longer a shadow,  
But clothed with the Gleam.

## VIII

And broader and brighter  
The Gleam flying onward,  
Wed to the melody,  
Sang thro' the world ;  
And slower and fainter,  
Old and weary,  
But eager to follow,  
I saw, whenever  
In passing it glanced upon  
Hamlet or city,  
That under the Crosses  
The dead man's garden,  
The mortal hillock,  
Would break into blossom .  
And so to the land's  
Last limit I came —

And can no longer,  
But die rejoicing,  
For thro' the Magic  
Of Him the Mighty,  
Who taught me in childhood,  
There on the border  
Of boundless Ocean,  
And all but in Heaven  
Hovers the Gleam.

## IX

Not of the sunlight,  
Not of the moonlight,  
Not of the starlight !  
O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions,  
Launch your vessel  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow the Gleam.

## ROMNEY'S REMORSE

'BEAT, little heart — I give you this  
and this.'  
Who are you ? What ! the Lady  
Hamilton ?  
Good, I am never weary painting  
you.  
To sit once more ? Cassandra, Hebe,  
Joan,  
Or spinning at your wheel beside the  
vine —  
Bacchante, what you will ; and if I  
fail  
To conjure and concentrate into form  
And color all you are, the fault is  
less  
In me than Art. What artist ever  
yet  
Could make pure light live on the  
canvas ? Art !  
Why should I so disrelish that short  
word ?  
Where am I ? snow on all the hills !  
so hot,  
So fever'd ! never colt would more  
delight  
To roll himself in meadow grass  
than I  
To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired ? or came of  
 your own will  
 To wait on one so broken, so forlorn ?  
 Have I not met you somewhere long  
 ago ?  
 I am all but sure I have—in Kendal  
 church —  
 O, yes ! I hired you for a season there,  
 And then we parted ; but you look so  
 kind <sup>21</sup>  
 That you will not deny my sultry  
 throat  
 One draught of icy water. There —  
 you spill  
 The drops upon my forehead. Your  
 hand shakes.  
 I am ashamed. I am a trouble to you,  
 Could kneel for your forgiveness.  
 Are they tears ?  
 For me—they do me too much grace  
 — for me ?  
 O Mary, Mary !  
 Vexing you with words !  
 Words only, born of fever, or the  
 fumes  
 Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,  
 — words, <sup>30</sup>  
 Wild babble. I have stumbled back  
 again  
 Into the common day, the sounder self.  
 God stay me there, if only for your  
 sake,  
 The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted  
 wife  
 That ever wore a Christian marriage-  
 ring.  
 My curse upon the Master's apo-  
 thegm,  
 That wife and children drag an artist  
 down !  
 This seem'd my lodestar in the heaven  
 of Art,  
 And lured me from the household fire  
 on earth.  
 To you my days have been a lifelong  
 lie, <sup>40</sup>  
 Grafted on half a truth ; and tho' you  
 say,  
 'Take comfort you have won the  
 painter's fame,'  
 The best in me that sees the worst in  
 me,  
 And groans to see it, finds no comfort  
 there.  
 What fame ? I am not Raphael,  
 Titian, — no,

Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.  
 Wrong there ! The painter's fame ?  
 but mine, that grew  
 Blown into glittering by the popular  
 breath,  
 May float awhile beneath the sun,  
 may roll  
 The rainbow hues of heaven about it —  
 There !  
 The color'd bubble bursts above the  
 abyss <sup>51</sup>  
 Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so ?  
 Her sad eyes plead for my own fame  
 with me  
 To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen  
 To flame along another dreary day.  
 Your hand. How bright you keep  
 your marriage-ring !  
 Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then  
 Bred this black mood ? or am I con-  
 scious, more  
 Than other Masters, of the chasm be-  
 tween  
 Work and Ideal ? Or does the gloom  
 of age <sup>60</sup>  
 And suffering cloud the height I stand  
 upon  
 Even from myself ? stand ? stood —  
 no more.

And yet  
 The world would lose, if such a wife  
 as you  
 Should vanish unrecorded. Might I  
 crave  
 One favor ? I am bankrupt of all  
 claim  
 On your obedience, and my strongest  
 wish  
 Falls flat before your least unwilling-  
 ness.  
 Still, would you — if it please you —  
 sit to me ?  
 I dream'd last night of that clear  
 summer noon,  
 When seated on a rock, and foot to  
 foot <sup>70</sup>  
 With your own shadow in the placid  
 lake,  
 You clasp'd our infant daughter, heart  
 to heart.



I had been among the hills, and  
brought you down  
A length of staghorn-moss, and this  
you twined  
About her cap. I see the picture  
yet,  
Mother and child. A sound from far  
away,  
No louder than a bee among the  
flowers,  
A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep  
You still'd it for the moment with a  
song  
Which often echo'd in me, while I  
stood<sup>80</sup>  
Before the great Madonna-master-  
pieces  
Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.

Mary, my crayons! if I can, I  
will.  
You should have been — I might have  
made you once,  
Had I but known you as I know you  
now —  
The true Alcestis of the time. Your  
song —  
Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof  
That I — even I — at times remember'd  
you.

'Beat upon mine, little heart! beat, beat!  
Beat upon mine! you are mine, my sweet!  
All mine from your pretty blue eyes to your  
feet,  
My sweet.'<sup>91</sup>

Less profile! turn to me — three-quar-  
ter face.

'Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my bliss!  
For I give you this, and I give you this! .  
And I blind your pretty blue eyes with a  
kiss!  
Sleep!'

Too early blinded by the kiss of  
death —

'Father and Mother will watch you grow' —  
You watch'd, not I; she did not grow,  
she died.<sup>100</sup>

'Father and Mother will watch you grow,  
And gather the roses whenever they blow,  
And find the white heather wherever you  
go,  
My sweet.'

Ah, my white heather only blooms in  
heaven  
With Milton's amaranth. There, there,  
there! a child  
Had shamed me at it — Down, you idle  
tools,  
Stamp't into dust — tremulous, all  
awry,  
Blurr'd like a landskip in a ruffled  
pool, —  
Not one stroke firm. This Art, that  
harlot-like<sup>110</sup>  
Seduced me from you, leaves me har-  
lot-like,  
Who love her still, and whimper, im-  
potent  
To win her back before I die — and  
then —  
Then, in the loud world's bastard judg-  
ment-day,  
One truth will damn me with the mind-  
less mob,  
Who feel no touch of my temptation,  
more  
Than all the myriad lies that blacken  
round  
The corpse of every man that gains a  
name;  
'This model husband, this fine artist!'  
Fool,  
What matters? Six foot deep of bu-  
rial mould<sup>120</sup>  
Will dull their comments! Ay, but  
when the shout  
Of His descending peals from heaven,  
and throbs  
Thro' earth and all her graves, if He  
should ask,  
'Why left you wife and children? for  
my sake,  
According to my word?' and I re-  
plied,  
'Nay, Lord, for Art,' why, that would  
sound so mean  
That all the dead, who wait the doom  
of hell  
For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,  
Wife-murders, — nay, the ruthless  
Mussulman  
Who flings his bowstrung harem in  
the sea,<sup>130</sup>  
Would turn, and glare at me, and  
point and jeer,  
And gibber at the worm who, living,  
made

The wife of wives a widow-bride, and  
lost  
Salvation for a sketch.

I am wild again !  
The coals of fire you heap upon my  
head  
Have crazed me. Some one knocking  
there without ?  
No ! Will my Indian brother come ? to  
find  
Me or my coffin ? Should I know the  
man ?  
This worn-out Reason dying in her  
house  
May leave the windows blinded, and  
if so, <sup>140</sup>  
Bid him farewell for me, and tell  
him —

Hope !  
I hear a death-bed angel whisper,  
'Hope.'  
'The miserable have no medicine —  
But only hope !' He said it — in the  
play.  
His crime was of the senses ; of the  
mind  
Mine — worse, cold, calculated.  
Tell my son —  
O, let me lean my head upon your  
breast.  
'Beat, little heart' on this fool brain  
of mine.  
I once had friends — and many — none  
like you.  
I love you more than when we mar-  
ried. Hope ! <sup>150</sup>  
O, yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,  
Human forgiveness touches heaven,  
and thence —  
For you forgive me, you are sure of  
that —  
Reflected, sends a light on the for-  
given.

### PARNASSUS

Exegi monumentum . . .  
Quod non . . .  
Possit diruere . . .

. . . innumerabilis  
Annorum series et fuga temporum.

HORACE.

I

WHAT be those crown'd forms high  
over the sacred fountain ?

Bards, that the mighty Muses have  
raised to the heights of the  
mountain,  
And over the flight of the Ages !  
O Goddesses, help me up thi-  
ther !  
Lightning may shrivel the laurel of  
Cæsar, but mine would not  
wither.  
Steep is the mountain, but you, you  
will help me to overcome it,  
And stand with my head in the zenith,  
and roll my voice from the sum-  
mit,  
Sounding for ever and ever thro' Earth  
and her listening nations,  
And mixt with the great sphere-music  
of stars and of constellations.

### II

What be those two shapes high over  
the sacred fountain,  
Taller than all the Muses, and huger  
than all the mountain ?  
On those two known peaks they stand  
ever spreading and heighten-  
ing ;  
Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted  
by more than lightning !  
Look, in their deep double shadow  
the crown'd ones all disappear-  
ing !  
Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope  
for a deathless hearing !  
'Sounding for ever and ever ?' pass  
on ! the sight confuses —  
These are Astronomy and Geology,  
terrible Muses !

### III

If the lips were touch'd with fire from  
off a pure Pierian altar,  
Tho' their music here be mortal need  
the singer greatly care ?  
Other songs for other worlds ! the fire  
within him would not falter ;  
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer  
here is Homer there.

### BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

THE Lord let the house of a brute to  
the soul of a man,  
And the man said, 'Am I your  
debtor ?'

And the Lord — 'Not yet; but make  
it as clean as you can,  
And then I will let you a better.'

## I

If my body come from brutes, my soul  
uncertain or a fable,  
Why not bask amid the senses while  
the sun of morning shines,  
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my  
hounds, and in my stable,  
Youth and health, and birth and  
wealth, and choice of women  
and of wines?

## II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old  
Age, save breaking my bones on  
the rack?  
Would I had past in the morn-  
ing that looks so bright from  
afar!

## OLD AGE

Done for thee? starved the wild beast  
that was linkt with thee eighty  
years back.  
Less weight now for the ladder-of-  
heaven that hangs on a star.

## I

If my body come from brutes, tho'  
somewhat finer than their own,  
I am heir, and this my king-  
dom. Shall the royal voice be  
mute?  
No, but if the rebel subject seek to  
drag me from the throne,  
Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and  
rule thy province of the brute.

## II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age,  
and I gaze at a field in the  
Past,  
Where I sank with the body at  
times in the sloughs of a low  
desire,  
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and  
the Man is quiet at last,  
As he stands on the heights of his  
life with a glimpse of a height  
that is higher.

## FAR—FAR—AWAY

(FOR MUSIC)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the  
fields he knew  
As where earth's green stole into hea-  
ven's own hue,  
Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native  
dells?  
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening  
bells  
Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic  
pain or joy,  
Thro' those three words would haunt  
him when a boy,  
Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a  
breath  
From some fair dawn beyond the  
doors of death  
Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates  
of birth,  
The faint horizons, all the bounds of  
earth,  
Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no  
words could give?  
O dying words, can Music make you  
live  
Far—far—away?

## POLITICS

WE move, the wheel must always  
move,  
Nor always on the plain,  
And if we move to such a goal  
As Wisdom hopes to gain,  
Then you that drive, and know your  
craft,  
Will firmly hold the rein,  
Nor lend an ear to random cries,  
Or you may drive in vain;  
For some cry 'Quick' and some cry  
'Slow,'

But, while the hills remain,  
Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the whip,  
Down hill 'Too-quick' the chain.

### BEAUTIFUL CITY

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater  
of European confusion,  
O you with your passionate shriek  
for the rights of an equal hu-  
manity,  
How often your Re-volution has pro-  
ven but E-volution  
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides  
of a civic insanity !

### THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,  
When I was in my June, you in  
your May,  
Two words, 'My Rose,' set all your  
face aglow,  
And now that I am white and you  
are gray,  
That blush of fifty years ago, my  
dear,  
Blooms in the past, but close to me  
to-day,  
As this red rose, which on our terrace  
here  
Glow in the blue of fifty miles  
away.

### THE PLAY

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so  
gloom'd with woe  
You all but sicken at the shifting  
scenes.  
And yet be patient. Our Playwright  
may show  
In some fifth act what this wild  
Drama means.

### ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN EFFEMINATE MANNER

WHILE man and woman still are in-  
complete,  
I prize that soul where man and wo-  
man meet,

Which types all Nature's male and  
female plan,  
But, friend, man-woman is not womar  
man.

### TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN THE ENGLISH

You make our faults too gross, and  
thence maintain  
Our darker future. May your fears  
be vain !  
At times the small black fly upon the  
pane  
May seem the black ox of the distant  
plain.

### THE SNOWDROP

MANY, many welcomes,  
February fair-maid,  
Ever as of old time,  
Solitary firstling,  
Coming in the cold time,  
Prophet of the gay time,  
Prophet of the May time,  
Prophet of the roses,  
Many, many welcomes,  
February fair-maid !

### THE THROSTLE

'SUMMER is coming, summer is com-  
ing.  
I know it, I know it, I know it.  
Light again, leaf again, life again,  
love again !'  
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.  
Last year you sang it as gladly.  
'New, new, new, new !' Is it then  
so new  
That you should carol so madly ?

'Love again, song again, nest again,  
young again.'  
Never a prophet so crazy !  
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,  
See, there is hardly a daisy.

'Here again, here, here, here, happy  
year !'

O warble unchidden, unbidden !  
 Summer is coming, is coming, my  
     dear,  
 And all the winters are hidden.

### THE OAK

Live thy Life,  
     Young and old,  
 Like yon oak,  
 Bright in spring,  
     Living gold ;

Summer-rich  
     Then ; and then  
 Autumn-changed,  
 Soberer-hued  
     Gold again.

All his leaves  
     Fallen at length,

Look, he stands,  
 Trunk and bough,  
     Naked strength.

### IN MEMORIAM

W. G. WARD

FAREWELL, whose like on earth I  
     shall not find,  
 Whose Faith and Work were bells  
     of full accord,  
 My friend, the most unworldly of  
     mankind,  
 Most generous of all Ultramontanes,  
     Ward,  
 How subtle at tierce and quart of  
     mind with mind,  
 How loyal in the following of thy  
     Lord !



QUEEN MARY

## QUEEN MARY

### A DRAMA

#### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

QUEEN MARY.

PHILIP, *King of Naples and Sicily, afterwards King of Spain.*

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

REGINALD POLE, *Cardinal and Papal Legate.*

SIMON RENARD, *Spanish Ambassador.*

LE SIEUR DE NOAILLES, *French Ambassador.*

THOMAS CRANMER, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

SIR NICHOLAS HEATH, *Archbishop of York; Lord Chancellor after Gardiner.*

EDWARD COURTENAY, *Earl of Devon.*

LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, *afterwards Lord Howard, and Lord High Admiral.*

LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME.

LORD PAGET.

LORD PETRE.

STEPHEN GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.*

EDMUND BONNER, *Bishop of London.*

THOMAS THIRLBY, *Bishop of Ely.*

SIR THOMAS WYATT

SIR THOMAS STAFFORD } *Insurrectionary Leaders.*

SIR RALPH BAGENHALL.  
 SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.  
 SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.  
 SIR WILLIAM CECIL.  
 SIR THOMAS WHITE, *Lord Mayor of London.*  
 THE DUKE OF ALVA } *attending on Philip.*  
 THE COUNT DE FERIA }  
 PETER MARTYR.  
 FATHER COLE.  
 FATHER BOURNE.  
 VILLA GARCIA.  
 SOTO.  
 CAPTAIN BRETT } *Adherents of Wyatt.*  
 ANTHONY KNYVETT }  
 PETERS, *Gentleman of Lord Howard.*  
 ROGER, *Servant to Noailles.*  
 WILLIAM, *Servant to Wyatt.*  
 STEWARD OF HOUSEHOLD *to the Princess Elizabeth.*  
 OLD NOKES and NOKES.  
 MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, *Mother of Courtenay.*  
 LADY CLARENCE  
 LADY MAGDALEN DACRES } *Ladies in Waiting to the Queen.*  
 ALICE }  
 MAID OF HONOR *to the Princess Elizabeth.*  
 JOAN } *two Country Wives.*  
 TIB }

Lords and other Attendants, Members of the Privy Council, Members of Parliament, Two Gentlemen, Aldermen, Citizens, Peasants, Ushers, Messengers, Guards, Pages, Gossellers, Marshalmen, etc.

## QUEEN MARY

### ACT I

#### SCENE I. — ALDGATE RICHLY DECORATED

##### CROWD. MARSHALMEN

*Marshalmen.* Stand back, keep a clear lane! When will her Majesty pass, say'st thou? why now, even now; wherefore draw back your heads and your horns before I break them, and make what noise you will with your tongues, so it be not treason. Long live Queen Mary, the lawful and legitimate daughter of Harry the Eighth! Shout, knaves! <sup>10</sup>

*Citizens.* Long live Queen Mary!

*First Citizen.* That's a hard word, legitimate; what does it mean?

*Second Citizen.* It means a bastard.

*Third Citizen.* Nay, it means true-born.

*First Citizen.* Why, did n't the Parliament make her a bastard?

*Second Citizen.* No; it was the Lady Elizabeth. <sup>20</sup>

*Third Citizen.* That was after, man; that was after.

*First Citizen.* Then which is the bastard?

*Second Citizen.* Troth, they be both bastards by Act of Parliament and Council.

*Third Citizen.* Ay, the Parliament can make every true-born man of us a bastard. Old Nokes, can't it make thee a bastard? thou shouldst know, for thou art as white as three Christ-mases. <sup>33</sup>

*Old Nokes (dreamily).* Who's a-passing? King Edward or King Richard?

*Third Citizen.* No, old Nokes.

*Old Nokes.* It's Harry!

*Third Citizen.* It's Queen Mary.

*Old Nokes.* The blessed Mary's a-passing! [*Falls on his knees.*]

*Nokes.* Let father alone, my masters! he's past your questioning. <sup>43</sup>

*Third Citizen.* Answer thou for him, then! thou'rt no such cockerel thyself, for thou was born 't the tail end of old Harry the Seventh.

*Nokes.* Eh! that was afore bas-

tard-making began. I was born true man at five in the forenoon, i' the tail of old Harry, and so they can't make me a bastard. <sup>52</sup>

*Third Citizen.* But if Parliament can make the Queen a bastard, why, it follows all the more that they can make thee one, who art fray'd i' the knees, and out at elbow, and bald o' the back, and bursten at the toes, and down at heels.

*Nokes.* I was born of a true man and a ring'd wife, and I can't argue upon it; but I and my old woman 'ud burn upon it, that would we.

*Marshallman.* What are you cackling of bastardy under the Queen's own nose? I'll have you flogg'd and burnt too, by the rood I will.

*First Citizen.* He swears by the rood. Whew! <sup>69</sup>

*Second Citizen.* Hark! the trumpets.

*[The Procession passes, Mary and Elizabeth riding side by side, and disappears under the gate.]*

*Citizens.* Long live Queen Mary! down with all traitors! God save her Grace; and death to Northumberland! *[Exeunt.]*

Remain Two GENTLEMEN.

*First Gentleman.* By God's light a noble creature, right royal!

*Second Gentleman.* She looks comelier than ordinary to-day; but to my mind the Lady Elizabeth is the more noble and royal. <sup>81</sup>

*First Gentleman.* I mean the Lady Elizabeth. Did you hear (I have a daughter in her service who reported it) that she met the Queen at Wanstead with five hundred horse, and the Queen (tho' some say they be much divided) took her hand, call'd her sweet sister, and kiss'd not her alone, but all the ladies of her following. <sup>91</sup>

*Second Gentleman.* Ay, that was in her hour of joy. There will be plenty to sunder and unsister them again; this Gardiner for one, who is to be made Lord Chancellor, and will pounce like a wild beast out of his cage to worry Cranmer. <sup>98</sup>

*First Gentleman.* And, furthermore, my daughter said that when there

rose a talk of the late rebellion, she spoke even of Northumberland pitifully, and of the good Lady Jane as a poor innocent child who had but obeyed her father; and, furthermore, she said that no one in her time should be burnt for heresy.

*Second Gentleman.* Well, sir, I look for happy times. <sup>109</sup>

*First Gentleman.* There is but one thing against them. I know not if you know.

*Second Gentleman.* I suppose you touch upon the rumor that Charles, the master of the world, has offer'd her his son Philip, the Pope and the devil. I trust it is but a rumor. <sup>117</sup>

*First Gentleman.* She is going now to the Tower to loose the prisoners there, and among them Courtenay, to be made Earl of Devon, of royal blood, of splendid feature, whom the council and all her people wish her to marry. May it be so, for we are many of us Catholics, but few Papists, and the Hot Gospellers will go mad upon it.

*Second Gentleman.* Was she not betroth'd in her babyhood to the Great Emperor himself? <sup>129</sup>

*First Gentleman.* Ay, but he's too old.

*Second Gentleman.* And again to her cousin Reginald Pole, now Cardinal; but I hear that he too is full of aches and broken before his day.

*First Gentleman.* Oh, the Pope could dispense with his cardinalate, and his achage, and his breakage, if that were all. Will you not follow the procession? <sup>140</sup>

*Second Gentleman.* No; I have seen enough for this day.

*First Gentleman.* Well, I shall follow; if I can get near enough I shall judge with my own eyes whether her Grace incline to this splendid scion of Plantagenet. *[Exeunt.]*

## SCENE II

### A ROOM IN LAMBETH PALACE

*Cranmer.* To Strasburg, Antwerp, Frankfort, Zurich, Worms, Geneva, Basle — our bishops from their sees



Or fled, they say, or flying—Poinet,  
Barlow,  
Bale, Scory, Coverdale; besides the  
deans  
Of Christchurch, Durham, Exeter,  
and Wells—  
Ailmer and Bullingham, and hundreds  
more;  
So they report. I shall be left alone.  
No; Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, will  
not fly.

*Enter PETER MARTYR.*

*Peter Martyr.* Fly, Cranmer! were  
there nothing else, your name  
Stands first of those who sign'd the  
letters patent<sup>10</sup>  
That gave her royal crown to Lady  
Jane.

*Cranmer.* Stand first it may, but it  
was written last.  
Those that are now her privy council  
sign'd  
Before me; nay, the judges had pro-  
nounced  
That our young Edward might be-  
queath the crown  
Of England, putting by his father's  
will.  
Yet I stood out, till Edward sent for  
me.

The wan boy-king, with his fast-fad-  
ing eyes  
Fixt hard on mine, his frail transpar-  
ent hand,  
Damp with the sweat of death, and  
gripping mine,<sup>20</sup>  
Whisper'd me, if I loved him, not to  
yield

His Church of England to the Papal  
wolf  
And Mary; then I could no more—I  
sign'd.

Nay, for bare shame of inconsistency,  
She cannot pass her traitor council  
by,  
To make me headless.

*Peter Martyr.* That might be for-  
given.

I tell you, fly, my lord. You do not  
own  
The bodily presence in the Eucharist,  
Their wafer and perpetual sacrifice:  
Your creed will be your death.

*Cranmer.* Step after step,  
Thro' many voices crying right and  
left,<sup>31</sup>

Have I climb'd back into the primal  
church,  
And stand within the porch, and Christ  
with me.

My flight were such a scandal to the  
faith,  
The downfall of so many simple souls,  
I dare not leave my post.

*Peter Martyr.* But you divorced  
Queen Catharine and her father; hence,  
her hate

Will burn till you are burn'd.

*Cranmer.* I cannot help it.  
The Canonists and Schoolmen were  
with me.

'Thou shalt not wed thy brother's  
wife.'—'T is written,<sup>40</sup>  
'They shall be childless.' True, Mary  
was born,

But France would not accept her for  
a bride

As being born from incest; and this  
wrought

Upon the King; and child by child,  
you know,

Were momentary sparkles, out as quick  
Almost as kindled; and he brought  
his doubts

And fears to me. Peter, I'll swear  
for him

He *did* believe the bond incestuous.

But wherefore am I trenching on the  
time

That should already have seen your  
steps a mile<sup>50</sup>

From me and Lambeth? God be with  
you! Go.

*Peter Martyr.* Ah, but how fierce a  
letter you wrote against

Their superstition when they slander'd  
you

For setting up a mass at Canterbury  
To please the Queen!

*Cranmer.* It was a wheedling monk  
Set up the mass.

*Peter Martyr.* I know it, my good  
lord.

But you so bubbled over with hot  
terms

Of Satan, liars, blasphemy, Antichrist,  
She never will forgive you. Fly, my  
lord, fly!

*Cranmer.* I wrote it, and God grant  
me power to burn!<sup>60</sup>

*Peter Martyr.* They have given me  
a safe conduct; for all that

I dare not stay. I fear, I fear, I see you,

Dear friend, for the last time; farewell, and fly.

*Cranmer.* Fly and farewell, and let me die the death.

[*Exit* Peter Martyr.]

*Enter* OLD SERVANT.

O, kind and gentle master, the Queen's Officers

Are here in force to take you to the Tower.

*Cranmer.* Ay, gentle friend, admit them. I will go.

I thank my God it is too late to fly.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III

## ST. PAUL'S CROSS

FATHER BOURNE *in the pulpit.* A crowd. MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, COURTENAY. The SIEUR DE NOAILLES and his man ROGER *in front of the stage.* *Hubbub.*

*Noailles.* Hast thou let fall those papers in the palace?

*Roger.* Ay, sir.

*Noailles.* 'There will be no peace for Mary till Elizabeth lose her head.'

*Roger.* Ay, sir.

*Noailles.* And the other, 'Long live Elizabeth the Queen!'

*Roger.* Ay, sir; she needs must tread upon them.

*Noailles.* Well.

These beastly swine make such a grunting here,

I cannot catch what Father Bourne is saying. <sup>10</sup>

*Roger.* Quiet a moment, my masters; hear what the shaveling has to say for himself.

*Crowd.* Hush—hear!

*Bourne.*—and so this unhappy land, long divided in itself, and sever'd from the faith, will return into the one true fold, seeing that our gracious Virgin Queen hath—

*Crowd.* No pope! no pope! <sup>20</sup>

*Roger* (to those about him, mimicking Bourne).—hath sent for the holy legate of the holy father the Pope, Car-

dinal Pole, to give us all that holy absolution which—

*First Citizen.* Old Bourne to the life!

*Second Citizen.* Holy absolution! holy Inquisition! <sup>29</sup>

*Third Citizen.* Down with the Papist! [*Hubbub.*]

*Bourne.*—and now that your good bishop, Bonner, who hath lain so long under bonds for the faith— [*Hubbub.*]

*Noailles.* Friend Roger, steal thou in among the crowd, And get the swine to shout 'Elizabeth.'

Yon gray old Gospeller, sour as mid-winter,

Begin with him.

*Roger* (goes). By the mass, old friend, we'll have no pope here while the Lady Elizabeth lives. <sup>38</sup>

*Gospeller.* Art thou of the true faith, fellow, that swearest by the mass?

*Roger.* Ay, that am I, new converted, but the old leaven sticks to my tongue yet.

*First Citizen.* He says right; by the mass, we'll have no mass here. <sup>48</sup>

*Voices of the Crowd.* Peace! hear him; let his own words damn the Papist. From thine own mouth I judge thee—tear him down!

*Bourne.*—and since our gracious Queen, let me call her our second Virgin Mary, hath begun to re-edify the true temple—

*First Citizen.* Virgin Mary! we'll have no virgins here—we'll have the Lady Elizabeth! <sup>59</sup>

[*Swords are drawn, a knife is hurled and sticks in the pulpit. The mob throng to the pulpit stairs.*]

*Marchioness of Exeter.* Son Courtenay, wilt thou see the holy father

Murdered before thy face? up, son, and save him!

They love thee, and thou canst not come to harm.

*Courtenay* (in the pulpit). Shame, shame, my masters! are you English-born,

And set yourselves by hundreds against one? <sup>64</sup>

*Crowd.* A Courtenay ! a Courtenay !

[*A train of Spanish servants crosses at the back of the stage.*]

*Noailles.* These birds of passage come before their time.

Stave off the crowd upon the Spaniard there.

*Roger.* My masters, yonder's fatter game for you

Than this old gaping gurgoyne ; look you there —

The Prince of Spain coming to wed our Queen ! 70

After him, boys ! and pelt him from the city.

[*They seize stones and follow the Spaniards. Exeunt on the other side Marchioness of Exeter and Attendants.*]

*Noailles (to Roger).* Stand from me.

If Elizabeth lose her head —

That makes for France.

And if her people, anger'd thereupon,

Arise against her and dethrone the Queen —

That makes for France.

And if I breed confusion any way —

That makes for France.

Good-day, my Lord of Devon ;  
A bold heart yours to beard that raging mob !

*Courtenay.* My mother said, Go up ; and up I went. 80

I knew they would not do me any wrong,

For I am mighty popular with them, *Noailles.*

*Noailles.* You look'd a king.

*Courtenay.* Why not ? I am king's blood.

*Noailles.* And in the whirl of change may come to be one.

*Courtenay.* Ah !

*Noailles.* But does your gracious Queen entreat you kinglike ?

*Courtenay.* 'Fore God, I think she entreats me like a child.

*Noailles.* You've but a dull life in this maiden court,

I fear, my lord ?

*Courtenay.* A life of nods and yawns.

*Noailles.* So you would hopor my poor house to-night, 90

We might enliven you. Divers honest fellows,

The Duke of Suffolk lately freed from prison,

Sir Peter Carew and Sir Thomas Wyatt,

Sir Thomas Stafford, and some more — we play.

*Courtenay.* At what ?

*Noailles.* The game of chess.

*Courtenay.* The game of chess ! I can play well, and I shall beat you there.

*Noailles.* Ay, but we play with Henry, King of France,

And certain of his court.

His Highness makes his moves across the Channel,

We answer him with ours, and there are messengers 100

That go between us.

*Courtenay.* Why, such a game, sir, were whole years a-playing.

*Noailles.* Nay ; not so long I trust. That all depends

Upon the skill and swiftness of the players.

*Courtenay.* The King is skilful at it ?

*Noailles.* Very, my Lord.

*Courtenay.* And the stakes high ?

*Noailles.* But not beyond your means.

*Courtenay.* Well, I'm the first of players. I shall win.

*Noailles.* With our advice and in our company,

And so you well attend to the King's moves,

I think you may.

*Courtenay.* When do you meet ?

*Noailles.* To-night.

*Courtenay (aside).* I will be there ; the fellow's at his tricks — 111

Deep — I shall fathom him. (*Aloud.*) Good morning, *Noailles.*

[*Exit Courtenay.*]

*Noailles.* Good-day, my Lord. Strange game of chess ! a king

That with her own pawns plays against a queen,

Whose play is all to find herself a king. Ay ; but this fine blue-blooded Courtenay seems

Too princely for a pawn. Call him a knight,

That, with an ass's, not a horse's head,  
Skips every way, from levity or from  
fear.

Well, we shall use him somehow, so  
that Gardiner <sup>120</sup>

And Simon Renard spy not out our  
game

Too early. Roger, thinkest thou that  
any one

Suspected thee to be my man?

*Roger.* Not one, sir.

*Noailles.* No! the disguise was  
perfect. Let's away. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE IV

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

ELIZABETH. *Enter* COURTENAY.

*Courtenay.* So yet am I,  
Unless my friends and mirrors lie to  
me,  
A goodlier-looking fellow than this  
Philip.

Pah!

The Queen is ill advised. Shall I turn  
traitor?

They've almost talked me into it; yet  
the word

Affrights me somewhat; to be such a  
one

As Harry Bolingbroke hath a lure in  
it.

Good now, my Lady Queen, tho' by  
your age

And by your looks you are not worth  
the having, <sup>10</sup>

Yet by your crown you are.

[*Seeing Elizabeth.*]

The Princess there?

If I tried her, and la — she's amorous.  
Have we not heard of her in Edward's  
time,

Her freaks and frolics with the late  
Lord Admiral?

I do believe she'd yield. I should be  
still

A party in the State; and then, who  
knows —

*Elizabeth.* What are you musing  
on, my Lord of Devon?

*Courtenay.* Has not the Queen —

*Elizabeth.* Done what, Sir?

*Courtenay.* — made you follow

The Lady Suffolk and the Lady Len  
nox? — you,

The heir presumptive.

*Elizabeth.* Why do you ask? you  
know it. <sup>20</sup>

*Courtenay.* You needs must bear  
it hardly.

*Elizabeth.* No, indeed!

I am utterly submissive to the Queen.

*Courtenay.* Well, I was musing  
upon that; the Queen

Is both my foe and yours; we should  
be friends.

*Elizabeth.* My Lord, the hatred of  
another to us

Is no true bond of friendship.

*Courtenay.* Might it not  
Be the rough preface of some closer  
bond?

*Elizabeth.* My lord, you late were  
loosed from out the Tower,

Where, like a butterfly in a chrysalis,  
You spent your life; that broken, out  
you flutter <sup>30</sup>

Thro' the new world, go zigzag, now  
would settle

Upon this flower, now that. But all  
things here

At court are known; you have so-  
licit

The Queen, and been rejected.

*Courtenay.* Flower, she!  
Half faded! but you, cousin, are fresh  
and sweet

As the first flower no bee has ever  
tried.

*Elizabeth.* Are you the bee to try  
me? why, but now

I called you butterfly.

*Courtenay.* You did me wrong.  
I love not to be called a butterfly.

Why do you call me butterfly? <sup>40</sup>

*Elizabeth.* Why do you go so gay  
then?

*Courtenay.* Velvet and gold.

This dress was made me as the Earl  
of Devon

To take my seat in; looks it not right  
royal?

*Elizabeth.* So royal that the Queen  
forbade you wearing it.

*Courtenay.* I wear it then to spite  
her.

*Elizabeth.* My lord, my lord;  
I see you in the Tower again. Her

Majesty

Hears you affect the Prince — prelates  
kneel to you. —

*Courtenay.* I am the noblest blood  
in Europe, Madam,

A Courtenay of Devon, and her cousin.

*Elizabeth.* She hears you make your  
boast that after all <sup>50</sup>

She means to wed you. Folly, my  
good lord.

*Courtenay.* How folly? a great party  
in the State

Wills me to wed her.

*Elizabeth.* Failing her, my lord,  
Doth not as great a party in the State  
Will you to wed me?

*Courtenay.* Even so, fair lady.

*Elizabeth.* You know to flatter ladies.

*Courtenay.* Nay, I meant  
True matters of the heart.

*Elizabeth.* My heart, my lord,  
Is no great party in the State as  
yet.

*Courtenay.* Great, said you? nay,  
you shall be great. I love you,  
Lay my life in your hands. Can you  
be close? <sup>60</sup>

*Elizabeth.* Can you, my lord?

*Courtenay.* Close as a miser's casket.  
Listen:

The King of France, Noailles the Am-  
bassador,

The Duke of Suffolk and Sir Peter  
Carew,

Sir Thomas Wyatt, I myself, some  
others,

Have sworn this Spanish marriage  
shall not be.

If Mary will not hear us — well — con-  
jecture —

Were I in Devon with my wedded  
bride,

The people there so worship me —  
your ear;

You shall be Queen.

*Elizabeth.* You speak too low, my  
lord; <sup>70</sup>

I cannot hear you.

*Courtenay.* I'll repeat it.

*Elizabeth.* No! <sup>No!</sup>  
Stand further off, or you may lose  
your head.

*Courtenay.* I have a head to lose for  
your sweet sake.

*Elizabeth.* Have you, my lord? Best  
keep it for your own.

Nay, pout not, cousin.

Not many friends are mine, except  
indeed

Among the many. I believe you mine,  
And so you may continue mine, fare-  
well,

And that at once.

*Enter MARY, behind.*

*Mary.* Whispering — leagued to-  
gether

To bar me from my Philip.

*Courtenay.* Pray — consider —

*Elizabeth* (seeing the Queen). Well,  
that's a noble horse of yours,  
my lord. <sup>81</sup>

I trust that he will carry you well to  
day,

And heal your headache.

*Courtenay.* You are wild; what  
headache?

Heartache, perchance; not headache.

*Elizabeth* (aside to Courtenay). Are  
you blind?

[*Courtenay sees the Queen and exit.*

*Exit Mary.*

*Enter LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.*

*Howard.* Was that my Lord of Devon?  
do not you

Be seen in corners with my Lord of  
Devon.

He hath fallen out of favor with the  
Queen.

She fears the lords may side with you  
and him

Against her marriage; therefore is he  
dangerous.

And if this Prince of fluff and feather  
come <sup>90</sup>

To woo you, niece, he is dangerous  
everyway.

*Elizabeth.* Not very dangerous that  
way, my good uncle.

*Howard.* But your own state is full  
of danger here.

The disaffected, heretics, reformers,  
Look to you as the one to crown their  
ends.

Mix not yourself with any plot I pray  
you;

Nay, if by chance you hear of any  
such,

Speak not thereof — no, not to your  
best friend,

Lest you should be confounded with  
it. Still —

Perinde ac cadaver — as the priest  
says, <sup>100</sup>

You know your Latin—quiet as a dead body.

What was my Lord of Devon telling you?

*Elizabeth.* Whether he told me anything or not,

I follow your good counsel, gracious uncle.

Quiet as a dead body.

*Howard.* You do right well.

I do not care to know; but this I charge you,

Tell Courtenay nothing. The Lord Chancellor—

I count it as a kind of virtue in him,

He hath not many—as a mastiff dog May love a puppy cur for no more reason

Than that the twain have been tied up together,

Thus Gardiner—for the two were fellow-prisoners

So many years in yon accursed Tower—

Hath taken to this Courtenay. Look to it, niece,

He hath no fence when Gardiner questions him;

All oozes out; yet him—because they know him

The last White Rose, the last Plantagenet—

Nay, there is Cardinal Pole, too—the people

Claim as their natural leader—ay, some say

That you shall marry him, make him king belike.

*Elizabeth.* Do they say so, good uncle?

*Howard.* Ay, good niece!

You should be plain and open with me, niece.

You should not play upon me.

*Elizabeth.* No, good uncle.

*Enter GARDINER.*

*Gardiner.* The Queen would see your Grace upon the moment.

*Elizabeth.* Why, my lord bishop?

*Gardiner.* I think she means to counsel your withdrawing

To Ashridge, or some other country house.

*Elizabeth.* Why, my lord bishop?

*Gardiner.* I do but bring the message, know no more.

Your Grace will hear her reasons from herself.

*Elizabeth.* 'Tis mine own wish full—<sup>130</sup>

fill'd before the word Was spoken, for in truth I had meant to crave

Permission of her Highness to retire To Ashridge, and pursue my studies there.

*Gardiner.* Madam, to have the wish before the word

Is man's good fairy—and the Queen is yours.

I left her with rich jewels in her hand, Whereof 'tis like enough she means to make

A farewell present to your Grace.

*Elizabeth.* My lord, I have the jewel of a loyal heart.

*Gardiner.* I doubt it not, madam, most loyal. [*Bows low and exit.*]

*Howard.* See,<sup>141</sup>

This comes of parleying with my Lord of Devon.

Well, well, you must obey; and I myself

Believe it will be better for your welfare.

Your time will come.

*Elizabeth.* I think my time will come.

Uncle, I am of sovereign nature, that I know,

Not to be quell'd; and I have felt within me

Stirrings of some great doom when God's just hour

Peals—but this fierce old Gardiner—his big baldness,<sup>150</sup>

That irritable forelock which he rubs, His buzzard beak and deep-incavern'd

eyes

Half fright me.

*Howard.* You've a bold heart; keep it so.

He cannot touch you save that you turn traitor;

And so take heed I pray you—you are one

Who love that men should smile upon you, niece.

They'd smile you into treason—some of them.

*Elizabeth.* I spy the rock beneath the smiling sea.  
But if this Philip, the proud Catholic prince,  
And this bald priest, and she that hates me, seek <sup>160</sup>  
In that lone house to practise on my life,  
By poison, fire, shot, stab —

*Howard.* They will not, niece.  
Mine is the fleet and all the power at sea —

Or will be in a moment. If they dared  
To harm you, I would blow this Philip and all  
Your trouble to the dog-star and the devil.

*Elizabeth.* To the Pleiads, uncle ;  
they have lost a sister.

*Howard.* But why say that ? what have you done to lose her ?  
Come, come, I will go with you to the Queen. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE V

## A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY with PHILIP'S miniature.  
ALICE.

*Mary (kissing the miniature).* Most goodly, kinglike, and an emperor's son, —

A king to be, — is he not noble, girl ?

*Alice.* Goodly enough, your Grace, and yet, methinks,  
I have seen goodlier.

*Mary.* Ay ; some waxen doll  
Thy baby eyes have rested on, belike ;  
All red and white, the fashion of our land.

But my good mother came — God rest her soul ! —

Of Spain, and I am Spanish in myself,  
And in my likings.

*Alice.* By your Grace's leave,  
Your royal mother came of Spain, but took <sup>10</sup>

To the English red and white. Your royal father —

For so they say — was all pure lily and rose

In his youth, and like a lady.

*Mary.* O just God !

Sweet mother, you had time and cause enough

To sicken of his lilies and his roses.  
Cast off, betray'd, defamed, divorced, forlorn !

And then the King — that traitor past forgiveness,

The false archbishop fawning on him, married

The mother of Elizabeth — a heretic  
Even as *she* is ; but God hath sent me here <sup>20</sup>

To take such order with all heretics  
That it shall be, before I die, as tho'  
My father and my brother had not lived.

What wast thou saying of this Lady Jane,

Now in the Tower ?

*Alice.* Why madam, she was passing  
Some chapel down in Essex, and with her

Lady Anne Wharton, and the Lady Anne

Bow'd to the pyx ; but Lady Jane stood up

Stiff as the very backbone of heresy.  
And wherefore bow ye not, says Lady Anne, <sup>30</sup>

To him within there who made heaven and earth ?

I cannot, and I dare not, tell your Grace

What Lady Jane replied.

*Mary.* But I will have it.

*Alice.* She said — pray pardon me, and pity her —

She hath hearken'd evil counsel — ah ! she said

The baker made him.

*Mary.* Monstrous ! blasphemous !  
She ought to burn. Hence, thou

[*Exit Alice.*

No — being traitor  
Her head will fall. Shall it ? she is but a child.

We do not kill the child for doing that  
His father whipt him into doing — a head <sup>40</sup>

So full of grace and beauty ! would that mine

Were half as gracious ! O, my lord to be,

My love, for thy sake only !  
I am eleven years older than he is.  
But will he care for that ?

No, by the holy Virgin, being noble,  
 But love me only. Then the bastard  
 sprout,  
 My sister, is far fairer than myself.  
 Will he be drawn to her?  
 No, being of the true faith with my-  
 self.  
 Paget is for him — for to wed with  
 Spain  
 Would treble England — Gardiner is  
 against him;  
 The Council, people, Parliament  
 against him;  
 But I will have him! My hard father  
 hated me;  
 My brother rather hated me than loved;  
 My sister cowers and hates me. Holy  
 Virgin,  
 Plead with thy blessed Son; grant me  
 my prayer.  
 Give me my Philip; and we two will  
 lead  
 The living waters of the Faith again  
 Back thro' their widow'd channel here,  
 and watch  
 The parch'd banks rolling incense, as  
 of old,  
 To heaven, and kindled with the palms  
 of Christ!

*Enter USHER.*

Who waits, sir?

*Usher.* Madam, the Lord Chancel-  
 lor.

*Mary.* Bid him come in. (*Enter*  
*GARDINER.*) Good morning, my  
 good lord. [*Exit Usher.*]

*Gardiner.* That every morning of  
 your Majesty  
 May be most good, is every morning's  
 prayer  
 Of your most loyal subject, Stephen  
 Gardiner.

*Mary.* Come you to tell me this, my  
 lord?

*Gardiner.* And more.  
 Your people have begun to learn your  
 worth.  
 Your pious wish to pay King Edward's  
 debts,  
 Your lavish household curb'd, and the  
 remission  
 Of half that subsidy levied on the peo-  
 ple,  
 Make all tongues praise and all hearts  
 beat for you.

I'd have you yet more loved. The  
 realm is poor,  
 The exchequer at neap-tide; we might  
 withdraw

Part of our garrison at Calais.

*Mary.* Calais!  
 Our one point on the main, the gate of  
 France!

I am Queen of England; take mine  
 eyes, mine heart,  
 But do not lose me Calais.

*Gardiner.* Do not fear it.  
 Of that hereafter. I say your Grace is  
 loved.

That I may keep you thus, who am  
 your friend  
 And ever faithful counsellor, might I  
 speak?

*Mary.* I can forespeak your speak-  
 ing. Would I marry  
 Prince Philip, if all England hate him?  
 That is

Your question, and I front it with  
 another:

Is it England, or a party? Now, your  
 answer.

*Gardiner.* My answer is, I wear be-  
 neath my dress  
 A shirt of mail; my house hath been  
 assaulted,

And when I walk abroad the populace,  
 With fingers pointed like so many dag-  
 gers,

Stab me in fancy, hissing Spain and  
 Philip;

And when I sleep a hundred men-at-  
 arms

Guard my poor dreams for England.  
 Men would murder me,  
 Because they think me favorer of this  
 marriage.

*Mary.* And that were hard upon you,  
 my Lord Chancellor.

*Gardiner.* But our young Earl of  
 Devon —

*Mary.* Earl of Devon?  
 I freed him from the Tower, placed  
 him at Court;

I made him Earl of Devon, and — the  
 fool —

He wrecks his health and wealth on  
 courtesans,

And rolls himself in carrion like a dog.

*Gardiner.* More like a school-boy  
 that hath broken bounds  
 Sickening himself with sweets.



*Mary.* I will not hear of him.  
Good, then, they will revolt; but I am  
Tudor,  
And shall control them.

*Gardiner.* I will help you, madam,  
Even to the utmost. All the church is  
grateful.

You have ousted the mock priest, re-  
pulpited

The shepherd of Saint Peter, raised  
the rood again,

And brought us back the mass. I am  
all thanks

To God and to your Grace; yet I know  
well,

Your people, and I go with them so  
far,

Will brook nor Pope nor Spaniard  
here to play

The tyrant, or in commonwealth or  
church.

*Mary (showing the picture).* Is this  
the face of one who plays the  
tyrant?

Peruse it; is it not goodly, ay, and  
gentle?

*Gardiner.* Madam, methinks a cold  
face and a haughty.

And when your Highness talks of  
Courtenay —

Ay, true — a goodly one. I would  
his life

Were half as goodly (*aside*).

*Mary.* What is that you mutter?

*Gardiner.* O, madam, take it  
bluntly; marry Philip,

And be stepmother of a score of sons!  
The prince is known in Spain, in  
Flanders, ha!

For Philip —

*Mary.* You offend us; you may  
leave us.

You see thro' warping glasses.

*Gardiner.* If your Majesty —

*Mary.* I have sworn upon the body  
and blood of Christ

I'll none but Philip.

*Gardiner.* Hath your Grace so  
sworn?

*Mary.* Ay, Simon Renard knows  
it.

*Gardiner.* News to me!

It then remains for your poor Gardi-  
ner,

So you still care to trust him some-  
what less

Than Simon Renard, to compose the  
event

In some such form as least may harm  
your Grace.

*Mary.* I'll have the scandal sounded  
to the mud.

I know it a scandal.

*Gardiner.* All my hope is now  
It may be found a scandal.

*Mary.* You offend us.

*Gardiner (aside).* These princes are  
like children, must be phy-  
sick'd,

The bitter in the sweet. I have lost  
mine office,

It may be, thro' mine honesty, like a  
fool. [*Exit.*]

*Enter USHER.*

*Mary.* Who waits?

*Usher.* The ambassador from  
France, your Grace.

*Mary (sits down).* Bid him come in.  
Good morning, Sir de Noailles.

[*Exit Usher.*]

*Noailles (entering).* A happy morn-  
ing to your Majesty.

*Mary.* And I should some time  
have a happy morning;

I have had none yet. What says the  
King your master?

*Noailles.* Madam, my master hears  
with much alarm

That you may marry Philip, Prince  
of Spain —

Foreseeing, with whate'er unwilling-  
ness,

That if this Philip be the titular King  
Of England, and at war with him,  
your Grace

And kingdom will be suck'd into the  
war,

Ay, tho' you long for peace; where-  
fore, my master,

If but to prove your Majesty's good-  
will,

Would fain have some fresh treaty  
drawn between you.

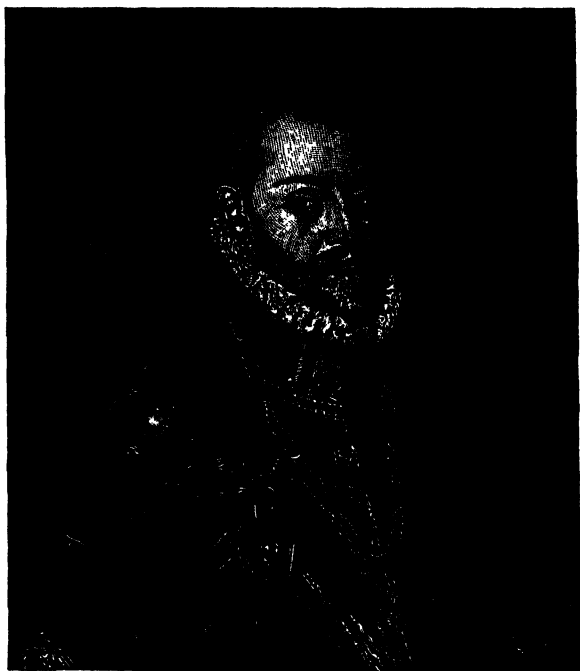
*Mary.* Why some fresh treaty?  
wherefore should I do it?

Sir, if we marry, we shall still main-  
tain

All former treaties with his Majesty.  
Our royal word for that! and your

good master,  
Pray God he do not be the first to

break them,



PHILIP

Must be content with that ; and so,  
farewell.

*Noailles (going, returns).* I would  
your answer had been other,  
madam,

For I foresee dark days.

*Mary.* And so do I, sir ;  
Your master works against me in the  
dark.

I do believe he help Northumberland  
Against me.

*Noailles.* Nay, pure phantasy,  
your Grace.

Why should he move against you ?

*Mary.* Will you hear why ?  
Mary of Scotland, — for I have not  
own'd

My sister, and I will not, — after  
me

Is heir of England ; and my royal  
father,

To make the crown of Scotland one  
with ours,

Had mark'd her for my brother Ed-  
ward's bride ;

Ay, but your king stole her a babe  
from Scotland

In order to betroth her to your Dau-  
phin.

See then : 170  
Mary of Scotland, married to your  
Dauphin,

Would make our England, France ;  
Mary of England, joining hands with  
Spain,

Would be too strong for France.

Yea, were there issue born to her,  
Spain and we,

One crown, might rule the world.  
There lies your fear.

That is your drift. You play at hide  
and seek.

Show me your faces !

*Noailles.* Madam, I am amazed.  
French, I must needs wish all good  
things for France.

That must be pardon'd me ; but I protest <sup>180</sup>

Your Grace's policy hath a farther flight

Than mine into the future. We but seek

Some settled ground for peace to stand upon.

*Mary.* Well, we will leave all this, sir, to our council.

Have you seen Philip ever ?

*Noailles.* Only once.

*Mary.* Is this like Philip ?

*Noailles.* Ay, but nobler-looking.

*Mary.* Hath he the large ability of the Emperor ?

*Noailles.* No, surely.

*Mary.* I can make allowance for those,

Thou speakest of the enemy of thy king.

*Noailles.* Make no allowance for the naked truth. <sup>190</sup>

He is every way a lesser man than Charles ;

Stone-hard, ice-cold — no dash of daring in him.

*Mary.* If cold, his life is pure.

*Noailles.* Why (*smiling*), no, indeed.

*Mary.* Say'st thou ?

*Noailles.* A very wanton life indeed (*smiling*).

*Mary.* Your audience is concluded, sir. (*Exit Noailles.*) You cannot learn a man's nature from his natural foe.

*Enter USHER.*

Who waits ?

*Usher.* The ambassador of Spain, your Grace. [*Exit.*]

*Enter SIMON RENARD.*

*Mary* (*rising to meet him*). Thou art ever welcome, Simon Renard.

Hast thou

Brought me the letter which thine Emperor promised <sup>199</sup>

Long since, a formal offer of the hand Of Philip ?

*Renard.* Nay, your Grace, it hath not reach'd me.

I know not wherefore — some mischance of flood,

And broken bridge, or spavin'd horse, or wave

And wind at their old battle ; he must have written.

*Mary.* But Philip never writes me one poor word,

Which in his absence had been all my wealth.

Strange in a wooer !

*Renard.* Yet I know the Prince, So your king-parliament suffer him to land,

Yearns to set foot upon your island shore.

*Mary.* God change the pebble which his kingly foot <sup>210</sup>

First presses into some more costly stone

Than ever blinded eye ! I'll have one mark it

And bring it me. I'll have it burnish'd firelike ;

I'll set it round with gold, with pearl, with diamond.

Let the great angel of the Church come with him,

Stand on the deck and spread his wings for sail !

God lay the waves and strow the storms at sea,

And here at land among the people ! O Renard,

I am much beset, I am almost in despair.

Paget is ours. Gardiner perchance is ours ; <sup>220</sup>

But for our heretic Parliament —

*Renard.* O madam,

You fly your thoughts like kites. My master, Charles,

Bade you go softly with your heretics here,

Until your throne had ceased to tremble. Then

Spit them like larks for aught I care. Besides,

When Henry broke the carcase of your church

To pieces, there were many wolves among you

Who dragg'd the scatter'd limbs into their den.

The Pope would have you make them render these ;

So would your cousin, Cardinal Pole — ill counsel ! <sup>230</sup>

These let them keep at present ; stir not yet

This matter of the Church lands. At  
his coming  
Your star will rise.

*Mary.* My star! a baleful one.  
I see but the black night, and hear the  
wolf.

What star?

*Renard.* Your star will be your  
princely son,  
Heir of this England and the Nether-  
lands!

And if your wolf the while should  
howl for more,  
We'll dust him from a bag of Spanish  
gold.

I do believe — I have dusted some al-  
ready —

That, soon or late, your Parliament is  
ours. 240

*Mary.* Why do they talk so foully  
of your Prince?

*Renard?*  
*Renard.* The lot of princes. To  
sit high

Is to be lied about.

*Mary.* They call him cold,  
Haughty, ay, worse.

*Renard.* Why, doubtless, Philip  
shows

Some of the bearing of your blue blood  
— still

All within measure -- nay, it well be-  
comes him.

*Mary.* Hath he the large ability of  
his father?

*Renard.* Nay, some believe that he  
will go beyond him.

*Mary.* Is this like him?

*Renard.* Ay, somewhat; but your  
Philip

Is the most princelike prince beneath  
the sun. 250

This is a daub to Philip.

*Mary.* Of a pure life?

*Renard.* As an angel among angels.

Yea, by Heaven,  
The text — Your Highness knows  
it, 'Whosoever

Looketh after a woman,' would not  
graze

The Prince of Spain. You are happy  
in him there,

Chaste as your Grace!

*Mary.* I am happy in him there.

*Renard.* And would be altogether  
happy, madam,

So that your sister were but look'd to  
closer.

You have sent her from the court, but  
then she goes, 259

I warrant, not to hear the nightingales,  
But hatch you some new treason in the  
woods.

*Mary.* We have our spies abroad to  
catch her tripping,

And then, if caught, to the Tower.

*Renard.* The Tower! the block!  
The word has turn'd your Highness  
pale; the thing

Was no such scarecrow in your father's  
time.

I have heard, the tongue yet quiver'd  
with the jest

When the head leapt — so common!  
I do think,

To save your crown, that it must  
come to this.

*Mary.* No, Renard; it must never  
come to this.

*Renard.* Not yet; but your old  
traitors of the Tower — 270

Why, when you put Northumberland  
to death,

The sentence having passed upon  
them all,

Spared you the Duke of Suffolk,  
Guildford Dudley,

Even that young girl who dared to  
wear your crown?

*Mary.* Dared? nay, not so; the  
child obey'd her father.

Spite of her tears her father forced it  
on her.

*Renard.* Good madam, when the  
Roman wish'd to reign,

He slew not him alone who wore the  
purple,

But his assessor in the throne, per-  
chance 279

A child more innocent than Lady Jane.

*Mary.* I am English Queen, not  
Roman Emperor.

*Renard.* Yet too much mercy is a  
want of mercy,

And wastes more life. Stamp out the  
fire, or this

Will smoulder and re-flame, and burn  
the throne

Where you should sit with Philip.

He will not come

Till she be gone.

*Mary.* Indeed, if that were true —

For Philip comes, one hand in mine,  
and one  
Steadying the tremulous pillars of the  
Church —

But no, no, no ! Farewell. I am  
somewhat faint

With our long talk. 'Tho' Queen, I  
am not Queen <sup>290</sup>

Of mine own heart, which every now  
and then

Beats me half dead. Yet stay, this  
golden chain —

My father on a birthday gave it me,  
And I have broken with my father —  
take

And wear it as memorial of a morn-  
ing

Which found me full of foolish doubts,  
and leaves me

As hopeful.

*Renard (aside).* Whew — the folly  
of all follies

Is to be lovesick for a shadow.  
(*Aloud.*) Madam,

This chains me to your service, not  
with gold,

But dearest links of love. Farewell,  
and trust me, <sup>300</sup>

Philip is yours. [*Exit.*]

*Mary.* Mine — but not yet all  
mine.

*Enter USHER.*

*Usher.* Your Council is in session,  
please your Majesty.

*Mary.* Sir, let them sit. I must  
have time to breathe.

No, say I come. (*Exit Usher.*) I won  
by boldness once.

The Emperor counsell'd me to fly to  
Flanders.

I would not ; but a hundred miles I  
rode,

Sent out my letters, call'd my friends  
together,

Struck home and won.

And when the Council would not  
crown me — thought

To bind me first by oaths I could not  
keep, <sup>310</sup>

And keep with Christ and conscience  
— was it boldness

Or weakness that won there ? when I,  
their Queen,

Cast myself down upon my knees be-  
fore them,

And those hard men brake into wo-  
man-tears,

Even Gardiner, all amazed, and in that  
passion

Gave me my Crown.

*Enter ALICE.*

Girl, hast thou ever heard  
Slanders against Prince Philip in our  
Court ?

*Alice.* What slanders ? I, your  
Grace ? no, never.

*Mary.* Nothing ?

*Alice.* Never, your Grace.

*Mary.* See that you neither hear  
them nor repeat ! <sup>320</sup>

*Alice (aside).* Good Lord ! but I  
have heard a thousand such —

Ay, and repeated them as often —  
mum !

Why comes that old fox-Fleming back  
again ?

*Enter RENARD.*

*Renard.* Madam, I scarce had left  
your Grace's presence

Before I chanced upon the messen-  
ger

Who brings that letter which we  
waited for —

The formal offer of Prince Philip's  
hand.

It craves an instant answer, Ay or No.

*Mary.* An instant Ay or No ! the  
Council sits.

Give it me quick.

*Alice (stepping before her).* Your  
Highness is all trembling. <sup>330</sup>

*Mary.* Make way.

[*Exit into the Council Chamber.*]

*Alice.* O Master Renard, Master  
Renard,

If you have falsely painted your fine  
Prince,

Praised where you should have  
blamed him, I pray God

No woman ever love you, Master Re-  
nard !

It breaks my heart to hear her moan  
at night

As tho' the nightmare never left her  
bed.

*Renard.* My pretty maiden, tell me,  
did you ever

Sigh for a beard ?

*Alice.* That's not a pretty question

*Renard.* Not prettily put? I mean,  
my pretty maiden, <sup>339</sup>  
A pretty man for such a pretty maiden.

*Alice.* My Lord of Devon is a  
pretty man.  
I hate him. Well, but if I have, what  
then?

*Renard.* Then, pretty maiden, you  
should know that whether  
A wind be warm or cold, it serves to  
fan  
A kindled fire.

*Alice.* According to the song.  
His friends would praise him, I believed  
'em,  
His foes would blame him, and I scorn'd  
'em,  
His friends — as angels I received 'em,  
His foes — the devil had suborn'd 'em.

*Renard.* Peace, pretty maiden.  
I hear them stirring in the Council  
Chamber. <sup>351</sup>  
Lord Paget's 'Ay' is sure — who else?  
and yet,  
They are all too much at odds to close  
at once  
In one full-throated No! Her High-  
ness comes.

*Enter MARY.*

*Alice.* How deathly pale! — a chair,  
your Highness.

[*Bringing one to the Queen.*]

*Renard.* Madam,  
The Council?

*Mary.* Ay! My Philip is all mine.  
[*Sinks into chair, half fainting.*]

## ACT II

### SCENE I. — ALINGTON CASTLE

*Sir Thomas Wyatt.* I do not hear  
from Carew or the Duke  
Of Suffolk, and till then I should not  
move.  
The Duke hath gone to Leicester;  
Carew stirs  
In Devon; that fine porcelain Courte-  
nay,  
Save that he fears he might be crack'd  
in using —  
I have known a semi-madman in my  
time  
So fancy-ridden — should be in Devon  
too.

*Enter WILLIAM.*

News abroad, William? <sup>8</sup>

*William.* None so new, Sir Thomas,  
and none so old, Sir Thomas. No  
new news that Philip comes to wed  
Mary, no old news that all men hate  
it. Old Sir Thomas would have hated  
it. The bells are ringing at Maid-  
stone. Does n't your worship hear?

*Wyatt.* Ay, for the Saints are come  
to reign again.  
Most like it is a Saint's-day. There's  
no call

As yet for me; so in this pause, before  
The mine be fired, it were a pious  
work

To string my father's sonnets, left  
about <sup>20</sup>

Like loosely-scatter'd jewels, in fair  
order,

And head them with a lamer rhyme  
of mine,

To grace his memory.

*William.* Ay, why not, Sir Thomas?  
He was a fine courtier, he; Queen  
Anne loved him. All the women loved  
him. I loved him, I was in Spain  
with him. I could n't eat in Spain, I  
could n't sleep in Spain. I hate Spain,  
Sir Thomas. <sup>30</sup>

*Wyatt.* But thou couldst drink in  
Spain if I remember.

*William.* Sir Thomas, we may grant  
the wine. Old Sir Thomas always  
granted the wine.

*Wyatt.* Hand me the casket with  
my father's sonnets.

*William.* Ay — sonnets — a fine  
courtier of the old Court, old Sir  
Thomas. [*Exit.*]

*Wyatt.* Courtier of many courts,  
he loved the more

His own gray towers, plain life, and  
letter'd peace, <sup>40</sup>

To read and rhyme in solitary fields,  
The lark above, the nightingale below,  
And answer them in song. The sire  
begets

Not half his likeness in the son. I fail  
Where he was fullest. Yet — to write  
it down. [*He writes.*]

*Re-enter WILLIAM.*

*William.* There is news, there is  
news, and no call for sonnet-sorting  
now, nor for sonnet-making either.

but ten thousand men on Penenden  
Heath all calling after your worship,  
and your worship's name heard into  
Maidstone market, and your worship  
the first man in Kent and Christen-  
dom, for the Queen's down, and the  
world's up, and your worship a-top  
of it.

*Wyatt.* Inverted Æsop — mountain  
out of mouse.

Say for ten thousand ten — and pot-  
house knaves,  
Brain-dizzied with a draught of morn-  
ing ale.

*Enter* ANTONY KNYVETT.

*William.* Here's Antony Knyvett.

*Knyvett.* Look you, Master Wyatt,  
Tear up that woman's work there.

*Wyatt.* No; not these,  
Dumb children of my father, that will  
speak

When I and thou and all rebellions lie  
Dead bodies without voice. Song  
flies, you know,

For ages.

*Knyvett.* Tut, your sonnet's a fly-  
ing ant,

Wing'd for a moment.

*Wyatt.* Well, for mine own work,  
[*Tearing the paper.*]

It lies there in six pieces at your feet;  
For all that, I can carry it in my head.

*Knyvett.* If you can carry your head  
upon your shoulders.

*Wyatt.* I fear you come to carry it  
off my shoulders,

And sonnet-making's safer.

*Knyvett.* Why, good lord,  
Write you as many sonnets as you  
will.

Ay, but not now; what, have you  
eyes, ears, brains?

This Philip and the black-faced  
swarms of Spain,

The hardest, cruellest people in the  
world,

Come locusting upon us, eat us up,  
Confiscate lands, goods, money —

*Wyatt, Wyatt,*

Wake, or the stout old island will be-  
come

A rotten limb of Spain. They roar  
for you

On Penenden Heath, a thousand of  
them — more —

80

All arm'd, waiting a leader; there's  
no glory

Like his who saves his country. And  
you sit

Sing-songing here; but, if I'm any  
judge,

By God, you are as poor a poet,  
*Wyatt,*

As a good soldier.

*Wyatt.* You as poor a critic  
As an honest friend; you stroke me  
on one cheek,

Buffet the other. Come, you bluster,  
Antony!

You know I know all this. I must  
not move

Until I hear from Carew and the Duke.  
I fear the mine is fired before the  
time.

*Knyvett (showing a paper).* But  
here's some Hebrew. Faith, I  
half forgot it.

Look — can you make it English? A  
strange youth

Suddenly thrust it on me, whisper'd,  
'Wyatt,'

And whisking round a corner, show'd  
his back

Before I read his face.

*Wyatt.* Ha! Courtenay's cipher.  
[*Reads.*]

'Sir Peter Carew fled to France; it  
is thought the Duke will be taken. I  
am with you still; but, for appearance  
sake, stay with the Queen. Gardiner  
knows, but the Council are all at  
odds, and the Queen hath no force  
for resistance. Move, if you move, at  
once.'

103

Is Peter Carew fled? Is the Duke  
taken?

Down scabbard, and out sword! and  
let Rebellion

Roar till throne rock, and crown fall!  
No, not that;

But we will teach Queen Mary how  
to reign.

Who are those that shout below there?  
*Knyvett.* Why, some fifty

That follow'd me from Penenden  
Heath in hope

To hear you speak.

*Wyatt.* Open the window, Knyvett;  
The mine is fired, and I will speak to  
them.

111

Men of Kent, England of England, you that have kept your old customs upright, while all the rest of England bowed theirs to the Norman, the cause that hath brought us together is not the cause of a county or a shire, but of this England, in whose crown our Kent is the fairest jewel. Philip shall not wed Mary; and ye have called me to be your leader. I know Spain. I have been there with my father; I have seen them in their own land, have marked the haughtiness of their nobles, the cruelty of their priests. If this man marry our Queen, however the Council and the Commons may fence round his power with restriction, he will be King, King of England, my masters; and the Queen, and the laws, and the people, his slaves. What? shall we have Spain on the throne and in the parliament; Spain in the pulpit and on the law-bench; Spain in all the great offices of state; Spain in our ships, in our forts, in our houses, in our beds? 137

*Crowd.* No! no! no Spain!

*William.* No Spain in our beds — that were worse than all. I have been there with old Sir Thomas, and the beds I know. I hate Spain.

*A Peasant.* But, Sir Thomas, must we levy war against the Queen's Grace? 145

*Wyatt.* No, my friend; war for the Queen's Grace — to save her from herself and Philip — war against Spain. And think not we shall be alone — thousands will flock to us. The Council, the Court itself, is on our side. The Lord Chancellor himself is on our side. The King of France is with us; the King of Denmark is with us; the world is with us — war against Spain! And if we move not now, yet it will be known that we have moved; and if Philip come to be King, O my God! The rope, the rack, the thumb-screw, the stake, the fire. If we move not now, Spain moves, bribes our nobles with her gold, and creeps, creeps snake-like about our legs till we cannot move at all; and ye know,

my masters, that wherever Spain hath ruled she hath wither'd all beneath her. Look at the New World — a paradise made hell; the red man, that good helpless creature, starved, maim'd, flogg'd, flay'd, burn'd, boil'd, buried alive, worried by dogs; and here, nearer home, the Netherlands, Sicily, Naples, Lombardy. I say no more — only this, their lot is yours. Forward to London with me! forward to London! If ye love your liberties or your skins, forward to London!

*Crowd.* Forward to London! A

Wyatt! a Wyatt!

*Wyatt.* But first to Rochester, to take the guns

From out the vessels lying in the river. 180

Then on.

*A Peasant.* Ay, but I fear we be too few, Sir Thomas.

*Wyatt.* Not many yet. The world as yet, my friend,

Is not half-waked; but every parish tower

Shall clang and clash alarum as we pass,

And pour along the land, and, swollen and fed

With indraughts and side-currents, in full force

Roll upon London.

*Crowd.* A Wyatt! a Wyatt! Forward!

*Knyvett.* Wyatt, shall we proclaim Elizabeth?

*Wyatt.* I'll think upon it, Knyvett.

*Knyvett.* Or Lady Jane?

*Wyatt.* No, poor soul, no. 191  
Ah, gray old castle of Alington, green field

Beside the brimming Medway, it may chance

That I shall never look upon you more.

*Knyvett.* Come, now, you're sonnetting again.

*Wyatt.* Not I.

I'll have my head set higher in the State;

Or — if the Lord God will it — on the stake. [Alarum.]



## SCENE II

## GUILDHALL

SIR THOMAS WHITE (*The Lord Mayor*), LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, ALDERMEN and CITIZENS.

*White.* I trust the Queen comes hither with her guards.

*Howard.* Ay, all in arms.

[*Several of the citizens move hastily out of the hall.*]

Why do they hurry out there ?

*White.* My lord, cut out the rotten from your apple,

Your apple eats the better. Let them go.

They go like those old Pharisees in John

Convicted by their conscience, arrant cowards,

Or tamperers with that treason out of Kent.

When will her Grace be here ?

*Howard.* In some few minutes. She will address your guilds and companies.

I have striven in vain to raise a man for her. 10

But help her in this exigency, make Your city loyal, and be the mightiest man

This day in England.

*White.* I am Thomas White. Few things have fail'd to which I set my will.

I do my most and best.

*Howard.* You know that after The Captain Brett, who went with your train bands

To fight with Wyatt, had gone over to him

With all his men, the Queen in that distress

Sent Cornwallis and Hastings to the traitor,

Feigning to treat with him about her marriage — 20

Know too what Wyatt said.

*White.* He'd sooner be, While this same marriage question was being argued,

Trusted than trust — the scoundrel — and demanded

Possession of her person and the Tower.

*Howard.* And four of her poor Council too, my Lord,

As hostages.

*White.* I know it. What do and say

Your Council at this hour ?

*Howard.* I will trust you. We fling ourselves on you, my lord.

The Council,

The Parliament as well, are troubled waters ;

And yet like waters of the fen they know not 30

Which way to flow. All hands on her address,

And upon you, Lord Mayor.

*White.* How look'd the city When now you past it ? Quiet ?

*Howard.* Like our Council, Your city is divided. As we past,

Some hail'd, some hiss'd us. There were citizens

Stood each before his shut-up booth, and look'd

As grim and grave as from a funeral. And here a knot of ruffians all in rags,

With execrating execrable eyes, Glared at the citizen. Here was a

young mother, 40

Her face on flame, her red hair all blown back,

She shrilling 'Wyatt,' while the boy she held

Mimick'd and piped her 'Wyatt,' as red as she

In hair and cheek; and almost elbowing her,

So close they stood, another, mute as death,

And white as her own milk; her babe in arms

Had felt the faltering of his mother's heart,

And look'd as bloodless. Here a pious Catholic,

Mumbling and mixing up in his scared prayers

Heaven and earth's Maries; over his bow'd shoulder 50

Scowl'd that world-hated and world-hating beast,

A haggard Anabaptist. Many such groups.

The names of Wyatt, Elizabeth, Courtenay,  
 Nay, the Queen's right to reign —  
 'fore God, the rogues! —  
 Were freely buzz'd among them. So  
 I say  
 Your city is divided, and I fear  
 One scruple, this or that way, of success  
 Would turn it thither. Wherefore  
 now the Queen,  
 In this low pulse and palsy of the  
 state,  
 Bade me to tell you that she counts on  
 you 60  
 And on myself as her two hands; on  
 you,  
 In your own city, as her right, my lord,  
 For you are loyal.

*White.* Am I Thomas White?  
 One word before she comes. Elizabeth —  
 Her name is much abused among these  
 traitors.  
 Where is she? She is loved by all of  
 us.  
 I scarce have heart to mingle in this  
 matter,  
 If she should be mishandled.

*Howard.* No, she shall not.  
 The Queen had written her word to  
 come to court:  
 Methought I smelt out Renard in the  
 letter 70  
 And fearing for her, sent a secret mis-  
 sive,  
 Which told her to be sick. Happily  
 or not,  
 It found her sick indeed.

*White.* God send her well!  
 Here comes her Royal Grace.

*Enter GUARDS, MARY and GARDINER.*  
*SIR THOMAS WHITE leads her to a*  
*raised seat on the dais.*

*White.* I, the Lord Mayor, and  
 these our companies  
 And guilds of London, gathered here,  
 beseech  
 Your Highness to accept our lowliest  
 thanks  
 For your most princely presence; and  
 we pray  
 That we, your true and loyal citizens,  
 From your own royal lips, at once may  
 know 80

The wherefore of this coming, and so  
 learn  
 Your royal will, and do it. — I, Lord  
 Mayor

Of London, and our guilds and com-  
 panies.

*Mary.* In mine own person am I  
 come to you,  
 To tell you what indeed ye see and  
 know,  
 How traitorously these rebels out of  
 Kent  
 Have made strong head against our-  
 selves and you.  
 They would not have me wed the  
 Prince of Spain;  
 That was their pretext — so they spake  
 at first —

But we sent divers of our Council to  
 them, 90  
 And by their answers to the question  
 ask'd,

It doth appear this marriage is the  
 least  
 Of all their quarrel.

They have betrayed the treason of  
 their hearts,  
 Seek to possess our person, hold our  
 Tower,

Place and displace our councillors, and  
 use  
 Both us and them according as they  
 will.

Now what I am ye know right well —  
 your Queen;

To whom, when I was wedded to the  
 realm

And the realm's laws — the spousal  
 ring whereof, 100

Not ever to be laid aside, I wear  
 Upon this finger — ye did promise  
 full

Allegiance and obedience to the death.  
 Ye know my father was the rightful  
 heir

Of England, and his right came down  
 to me,

Corroborate by your acts of Parlia-  
 ment.

And as ye were most loving unto him,  
 So doubtless will ye show yourselves  
 to me.

Wherefore, ye will not brook that any  
 one

Should seize our person, occupy our  
 state, 110

More specially a traitor so presumptuous  
 As this same Wyatt, who hath tamper'd with  
 A public ignorance, and, under color  
 Of such a cause as hath no color, seeks  
 To bend the laws to his own will, and yield  
 Full scope to persons rascal and forlorn,  
 To make free spoil and havoc of your goods.  
 Now, as your Prince, I say,  
 I, that was never mother, cannot tell  
 How mothers love their children; yet, methinks,  
 A prince as naturally may love his people  
 As these their children; and be sure your Queen  
 So loves you, and so loving, needs must deem  
 This love by you return'd as heartily;  
 And thro' this common knot and bond of love,  
 Doubt not they will be speedily overthrown.  
 As to this marriage, ye shall understand  
 We made thereto no treaty of ourselves,  
 And set no foot theretoward unadvised  
 Of all our Privy Council; furthermore,  
 This marriage had the assent of those to whom  
 The King, my father, did commit his trust;  
 Who not alone esteem'd it honorable,  
 But for the wealth and glory of our realm,  
 And all our loving subjects, most expedient.  
 As to myself,  
 I am not so set on wedlock as to choose  
 But where I list, nor yet so amorous  
 That I must needs be husbanded; I thank God,  
 I have lived a virgin, and I noway doubt  
 But that, with God's grace, I can live so still.  
 Yet if it might please God that I should leave  
 Some fruit of mine own body after me,

To be your king, ye would rejoice thereat,  
 And it would be your comfort, as I trust;  
 And truly, if I either thought or knew  
 This marriage should bring loss or danger to you,  
 My subjects, or impair in any way  
 This royal state of England, I would never  
 Consent thereto, nor marry while I live.  
 Moreover, if this marriage should not seem,  
 Before our own High Court of Parliament,  
 To be of rich advantage to our realm,  
 We will refrain, and not alone from this,  
 Likewise from any other, out of which  
 Looms the least chance of peril to our realm.  
 Wherefore be bold, and with your lawful Prince  
 Stand fast against our enemies and yours,  
 And fear them not. I fear them not.  
 My lord,  
 I leave Lord William Howard in your city,  
 To guard and keep you whole and safe from all  
 The spoil and sackage aim'd at by these rebels,  
 Who mouth and foam against the Prince of Spain.  
*Voices.* Long live Queen Mary!  
 Down with Wyatt!  
 The Queen!  
*White.* Three voices from our guilds and companies!  
 You are shy and proud like Englishmen, my masters,  
 And will not trust your voices. Understand,  
 Your lawful Prince hath come to cast herself  
 On loyal hearts and bosoms, hoped to fall  
 Into the wide-spread arms of fealty,  
 And finds you statues. Speak at once  
 — and all!  
 For whom?  
 Our Sovereign Lady by King Harry's will,

The Queen of England — or the Kentish Squire ?

I know you loyal. Speak ! in the name of God !

The Queen of England or the rabble of Kent ?

The reeking dungfork master of the mace !

Your havings wasted by the scythe and spade —

Your rights and charters hobnail'd into slush —

Your houses fired — your gutters bubbling blood — 180

*Acclamation.* No! No! The Queen! the Queen!

*White.* Your Highness hears This burst and bass of loyal harmony, And how we each and all of us abhor

The venomous, bestial, devilish revolt Of Thomas Wyatt. Hear us now make oath

To raise your Highness thirty thousand men,

And arm and strike as with one hand, and brush

This Wyatt from our shoulders, like a flea

That might have leapt upon us unawares.

Swear with me, noble fellow-citizens, all, 190

With all your trades, and guilds, and companies.

*Citizens.* We swear !

*Mary.* We thank your lordship and your loyal city.

[*Exit Mary, attended.*]

*White.* I trust this day, thro' God, I have saved the crown.

*First Alderman.* Ay, so my Lord of Pembroke in command

Of all her force be safe ; but there are doubts.

*Second Alderman.* I hear that Gardiner, coming with the Queen, And meeting Pembroke, bent to his saddle-bow,

As if to win the man by flattering him. Is he so safe to fight upon her side ?

*First Alderman.* If not, there's no man safe.

*White.* Yes, Thomas White. I am safe enough ; no man need flatter me. 202

*Second Alderman.* Nay, no man need ; but did you mark our Queen ?

The color freely play'd into her face, And the half sight which makes her look so stern

Seem'd thro' that dim dilated world of hers

To read our faces ; I have never seen her

So quently or so goodly.

*White.* Courage, sir, That makes or man or woman look their goodliest.

Die like the torn fox dumb, but never whine 210

Like that poor heart, Northumberland, at the block.

*Bagenhall.* The man had children, and he whined for those.

Methinks most men are but poor-hearted, else

Should we so dote on courage, were it commoner ?

The Queen stands up, and speaks for her own self ;

And all men cry, She is queenly, she is goodly.

Yet she's no goodlier ; tho' my Lord Mayor here,

By his own rule, he hath been so bold to-day,

Should look more goodly than the rest of us.

*White.* Goodly ? I feel most goodly, heart and hand, 220

And strong to throw ten Wyatts and all Kent.

Ha ! ha ! sir ; but you jest ; I love it. A jest

In time of danger shows the pulses even.

Be merry ! yet, Sir Ralph, you look but sad.

I dare avouch you'd stand up for yourself,

Tho' all the world should bay like winter wolves.

*Bagenhall.* Who knows ? the man is proven by the hour.

*White.* The man should make the hour, not this the man ;

And Thomas White will prove this Thomas Wyatt,

And he will prove an Iden to this Cade, 230

And he will play the Walworth to this Wat.

Come, sirs, we prate; hence all—  
gather your men—

Myself must bustle. Wyatt comes to Southwark;

I'll have the drawbridge hewn into the Thames,

And see the citizens arm'd. Good day; good day. [*Exit White.*]

*Bagenhall.* One of much outdoor bluster.

*Howard.* For all that,  
Most honest, brave, and skilful; and his wealth

A fountain of perennial alms—his fault

So thoroughly to believe in his own self.

*Bagenhall.* Yet thoroughly to believe in one's own self,

So one's own self be thorough, were to do

Great things, my lord.

*Howard.* It may be.

*Bagenhall.* I have heard  
One of your Council fleer and jeer at him.

*Howard.* The nursery-cocker'd child will jeer at aught

That may seem strange beyond his nursery.

The statesman that shall jeer and fleer at men,

Makes enemies for himself and for his king;

And if he jeer, not seeing the true man

Behind his folly, he is thrice the fool;

And if he see the man and still will jeer,

He is child and fool, and traitor to the State.

Who is he? let me shun him.

*Bagenhall.* Nay, my lord,  
He is damn'd enough already.

*Howard.* I must set  
The guard at Ludgate. Fare you well, Sir Ralph.

*Bagenhall.* 'Who knows?' I am for England. But who knows,

That knows the Queen, the Spaniard, and the Pope,

Whether I be for Wyatt, or the Queen?

[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III

#### LONDON BRIDGE

*Enter SIR THOMAS WYATT and BRETT.*

*Wyatt.* Brett, when the Duke of Norfolk moved against us  
Thou criest 'A Wyatt!' and flying to our side

Left his all bare, for which I love thee, Brett.

Have for thine asking aught that I can give,

For thro' thine help we are come to London Bridge;

But how to cross it balks me. I fear we cannot.

*Brett.* Nay, hardly, save by boat, swimming, or wings.

*Wyatt.* Last night I climb'd into the gate-house, Brett,

And scared the gray old porter and his wife.

And then I crept along the gloom and saw

They had hewn the drawbridge down into the river.

It roll'd as black as death; and that same tide

Which, coming with our coming, seem'd to smile

And sparkle like our fortune as thou saidest,

Ran sunless down, and moan'd against the piers.

But o'er the chasm I saw Lord William Howard

By torchlight, and his guard; four guns gaped at me,

Black, silent mouths. Had Howard spied me there

And made them speak, as well he might have done,

Their voice had left me none to tell you this.

What shall we do?

*Brett.* On somehow. To go back were to lose all.

*Wyatt.* On over London Bridge we cannot; stay we cannot; there is ordnance

On the White Tower and on the Devil's Tower,

And pointed full at Southwark. We  
must round  
By Kingston Bridge.

*Brett.* Ten miles about.

*Wyatt.* Even so.  
But I have notice from our partisans  
Within the city that they will stand  
by us

If Ludgate can be reach'd by dawn  
to-morrow. 29

*Enter one of WYATT'S men.*

*Man.* Sir Thomas, I've found this  
paper; pray your worship read it; I  
know not my letters; the old priests  
taught me nothing.

*Wyatt (reads).* 'Whosoever will ap-  
prehend the traitor Thomas Wyatt  
shall have a hundred pounds for re-  
ward.'

*Man.* Is that it? That's a big lot  
of money.

*Wyatt.* Ay, ay, my friend; not  
read it? 'tis not written  
Half plain enough. Give me a piece  
of paper! 40

[*Writes 'THOMAS WYATT' large.*  
There, any man can read that.

[*Sticks it in his cap.*

*Brett.* But that's foolhardy.

*Wyatt.* No! boldness, which will  
give my followers boldness.

*Enter MAN with a prisoner.*

*Man.* We found him, your wor-  
ship, a-plundering o' Bishop Win-  
chester's house; he says he's a poor  
gentleman.

*Wyatt.* Gentleman! a thief! Go  
hang him. Shall we make  
Those that we come to serve our  
sharpest foes?

*Brett.* Sir Thomas—

*Wyatt.* Hang him, I say.

*Brett.* Wyatt, but now you pro-  
mised me a boon.

*Wyatt.* Ay, and I warrant this fine  
fellow's life.

*Brett.* Even so; he was my neigh-  
bor once in Kent.

He's poor enough, has drunk and  
gambled out

All that he had, and gentleman he  
was.

We have been glad together; let him  
live.

*Wyatt.* He has gambled for his  
life and lost, he hangs.

No, no, my word's my word. Take  
thy poor gentleman!

Gamble thyself at once out of my  
sight,

Or I will dig thee with my dagger.  
Away! 66

Women and children!

*Enter a CROWD of WOMEN and CHILDREN.*

*First Woman.* O Sir Thomas, Sir  
Thomas, pray you go away, Sir  
Thomas, or you'll make the White  
Tower a black 'un for us this blessed  
day. He'll be the death on us; and  
you'll set the Devil's Tower a-spit-  
ting, and he'll smash all our bits o'  
things worse than Philip o' Spain. 69

*Second Woman.* Don't ye now go to  
think that we be for Philip o' Spain.

*Third Woman.* No, we know that  
ye be come to kill the Queen, and  
we'll pray for you all on our bended  
knees. But o' God's mercy don't ye  
kill the Queen here, Sir Thomas;  
look ye, here's little Dickon, and little  
Robin, and little Jenny—though  
she's but a side-cousin—and all on  
our knees, we pray you to kill the  
Queen further off, Sir Thomas. 81

*Wyatt.* My friends, I have not  
come to kill the Queen

Or here or there; I come to save you  
all,

And I'll go further off.

*Crowd.* Thanks, Sir Thomas, we  
be beholden to you, and we'll pray  
for you on our bended knees till our  
lives' end.

*Wyatt.* Be happy, I am your friend.  
To Kingston, forward!

[*Exeunt.*

#### SCENE IV

ROOM IN THE GATE-HOUSE OF WEST-  
MINSTER PALACE

MARY, ALICE, GARDINER, RENARD,  
LADIES.

*Gardiner.* Their cry is, Philip  
never shall be king.

*Mary.* Lord Pembroke in command  
of all our force

Will front their cry and shatter them  
into dust.

*Alice.* Was not Lord Pembroke  
with Northumberland?  
O madam, if this Pembroke should be  
false!

*Mary.* No, girl; most brave and  
loyal, brave and loyal.  
His breaking with Northumberland  
broke Northumberland.  
At the park gate he hovers with our  
guards.  
These Kentish plowmen cannot break  
the guards.

*Enter MESSENGER.*

*Messenger.* Wyatt, your Grace, hath  
broken thro' the guards 10  
And gone to Ludgate.

*Gardiner.* Madam, I much fear  
That all is lost; but we can save your  
Grace.

The river still is free. I do beseech  
you,  
There yet is time, take boat and pass  
to Windsor.

*Mary.* I pass to Windsor and I lose  
my crown.

*Gardiner.* Pass, then, I pray your  
Highness, to the Tower.

*Mary.* I shall but be their prisoner  
in the Tower.

*Cries without.* The traitor! treason!  
Pembroke!

*Ladies.* Treason! treason!

*Mary.* Peace.

False to Northumberland, is he false  
to me? 20

Bear witness, Renard, that I live and  
die

The true and faithful bride of Philip  
— A sound

Of feet and voices thickening hither  
— blows —

Hark, there is battle at the palace  
gates,

And I will out upon the gallery.

*Ladies.* No, no, your Grace; see  
there the arrows flying.

*Mary.* I am Harry's daughter, Tu-  
dor, and not Fear.

[*Goes out on the gallery.*]

The guards are all driven in, skulk  
into corners

Like rabbits to their holes. A gra-  
cious guard

Truly; shame on them! they have  
shut the gates! 30

*Enter SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.*

*Southwell.* The porter, please your  
Grace, hath shut the gates  
On friend and foe. Your gentlemen-  
at-arms,

If this be not your Grace's order,  
cry

To have the gates set wide again, and  
they

With their good battle-axes will do  
you right

Against all traitors.

*Mary.* They are the flower of Eng-  
land; set the gates wide.

[*Exit Southwell.*]

*Enter COURTENAY.*

*Courtenay.* All lost, all lost, all  
yielded! A barge, a barge!

The Queen must to the Tower.

*Mary.* Whence come you, sir?

*Courtenay.* From Charing Cross;  
the rebels broke us there, 40

And I sped hither with what haste I  
might

To save my royal cousin.

*Mary.* Where is Pembroke?

*Courtenay.* I left him somewhere  
in the thick of it.

*Mary.* Left him and fled; and thou  
that wouldst be King,

And hast nor heart nor honor! I my-  
self

Will down into the battle and there  
bide

The upshot of my quarrel, or die with  
those

That are no cowards and no Courte-  
nays.

*Courtenay.* I do not love your Grace  
should call me coward.

*Enter another MESSENGER.*

*Messenger.* Over, your Grace, all  
crush'd; the brave Lord William  
Thrust him from Ludgate, and the  
traitor flying 51

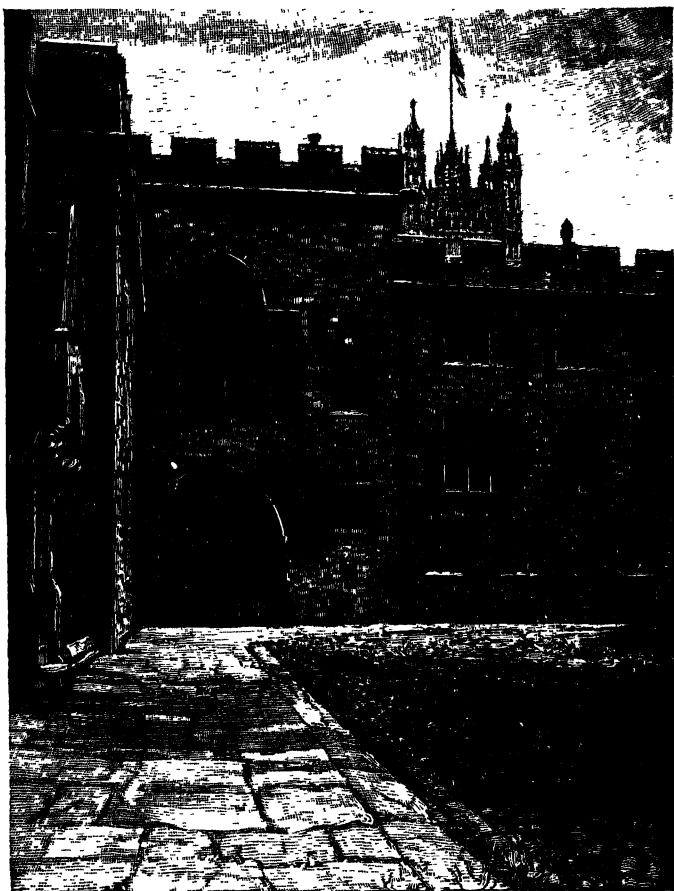
To Temple Bar, there by Sir Maurice  
Berkeley

Was taken prisoner.

*Mary.* To the Tower with him!

*Messenger.* 'Tis said he told Sir  
Maurice there was one  
Cognizant of this, and party thereunto,  
My Lord of Devon.

*Mary.* To the Tower with him!



GATE-HOUSE, WESTMINSTER

*Courtenay.* O la, the Tower, the Tower, always the Tower, I shall grow into it—I shall be the Tower.

*Mary.* Your lordship may not have so long to wait.  
Remove him!

*Courtenay.* La, to whistle out my life,  
And carve my coat upon the walls again!

[*Exit Courtenay, guarded.*]

*Messenger.* Also this Wyatt did confess the Princess  
Cognizant thereof, and party thereunto.

*Mary.* What? whom—whom did you say?

*Messenger.* Elizabeth,  
Your royal sister.

*Mary.* To the Tower with her!  
My foes are at my feet, and I an Queen.

[*Gardiner and her Ladies kneel to her*]



*Gardiner (rising).* There let them lie, your footstool! (*Aside.*) Can I strike Elizabeth? — not now and save the life Of Devon. If I save him, he and his Are bound to me — may strike hereafter. (*Aloud.*) Madam, <sup>70</sup> What Wyatt said, or what they said he said, Cries of the moment and the street — *Mary.* He said it. *Gardiner.* Your courts of justice will determine that. *Renard (advancing).* I trust by this your Highness will allow Some spice of wisdom in my telling you, When last we talk'd, that Philip would not come Till Guildford Dudley and the Duke of Suffolk <sup>77</sup> And Lady Jane had left us. *Mary.* They shall die. *Renard.* And your so loving sister? *Mary.* She shall die. My foes are at my feet, and Philip King. [*Exeunt.*]

## ACT III

## SCENE I. — THE CONDUIT IN GRACE-CHURCH

*Painted with the Nine Worthies, among them King Henry VIII. holding a book, on it inscribed 'Verbum Dei.'*

*Enter SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and SIR THOMAS STAFFORD.*

*Bagenhall.* A hundred here and hundreds hang'd in Kent. The tigress had unsheath'd her nails at last, And Renard and the Chancellor sharpen'd them. In every London street a gibbet stood. They are down to-day. Here by this house was one; The traitor husband dangled at the door, And when the traitor wife came out for bread To still the petty treason therewithin, Her cap would brush his heels. *Stafford.* It is Sir Ralph,

And muttering to himself as heretofore. <sup>10</sup>

Sir, see you aught up yonder? *Bagenhall.* I miss something. The tree that only bears dead fruit is gone.

*Stafford.* What tree, sir?

*Bagenhall.* Well, the tree in Virgil, sir, That bears not its own apples.

*Stafford.* What! the gallows?

*Bagenhall.* Sir, this dead fruit was ripening overmuch, And had to be removed lest living Spain

Should sicken at dead England.

*Stafford.* Not so dead

But that a shock may rouse her.

*Bagenhall.* I believe Sir Thomas Stafford?

*Stafford.* I am ill disguised.

*Bagenhall.* Well, are you not in peril here?

*Stafford.* I think so. <sup>20</sup>

I came to feel the pulse of England, whether

It beats hard at this marriage. Did you see it?

*Bagenhall.* Stafford, I am a sad man and a serious.

Far liefer had I in my country hall Been reading some old book, with mine old hound

Couch'd at my hearth, and mine old flask of wine

Beside me, than have seen it; yet I saw it.

*Stafford.* Good, was it splendid?

*Bagenhall.* Ay, if dukes, and earls, And counts, and sixty Spanish cavaliers,

Some six or seven bishops, diamonds, pearls, <sup>30</sup>

That royal commonplace too, cloth of gold,

Could make it so.

*Stafford.* And what was Mary's dress?

*Bagenhall.* Good faith, I was too sorry for the woman

To mark the dress. She wore red shoes!

*Stafford.* Red shoes!

*Bagenhall.* Scarlet, as if her feet were wash'd in blood,

As if she had waded in it.

*Stafford.* Were your eyes  
So bashful that you look'd no higher?

*Bagenhall.* A diamond,  
And Philip's gift, as proof of Philip's  
love,  
Who hath not any for any, — tho' a  
true one, 39  
Blazed false upon her heart.

*Stafford.* But this proud Prince —  
*Bagenhall.* Nay, he is King, you  
know, the King of Naples.

The father ceded Naples that the son,  
Being a King, might wed a Queen —  
O, he

Flamed in brocade — white satin his  
trunk-hose,

Inwrought with silver, — on his neck  
a collar,

Gold, thick with diamonds; hanging  
down from this

The Golden Fleece — and round his  
knee, misplaced,

Our English Garter, studded with  
great emeralds,

Rubies, I know not what. Have you  
had enough

Of all this gear?

*Stafford.* Ay, since you hate the  
telling it. 50

How look'd the Queen?

*Bagenhall.* No fairer for her jewels.  
And I could see that as the new-made  
couple

Came from the Minster, moving side  
by side

Beneath one canopy, ever and anon  
She cast on him a vassal smile of love,  
Which Philip with a glance of some  
distaste,

Or so methought, return'd. I may be  
wrong, sir.

This marriage will not hold.

*Stafford.* I think with you.  
The King of France will help to break  
it.

*Bagenhall.* France!  
We once had half of France, and  
hurl'd our battles 60  
Into the heart of Spain; but England  
now

Is but a ball chuck'd between France  
and Spain,

His in whose hand she drops. Harry  
of Bolingbroke

Had holpen Richard's tottering throne  
to stand,

Could Harry have foreseen that all our  
nobles

Would perish on the civil slaughter-  
field,

And leave the people naked to the  
Crown,

And the Crown naked to the people;  
the Crown

Female, too! Sir, no woman's regimen  
Can save us. We are fallen, and, as

I think, 70  
Never to rise again.

*Stafford.* You are too black-blooded.  
I'd make a move myself to hinder  
that;

I know some lusty fellows there in  
France.

*Bagenhall.* You would but make  
us weaker, Thomas Stafford.

Wyatt was a good soldier, yet he  
fail'd,

And strengthen'd Philip.

*Stafford.* Did not his last breath  
Clear Courtenay and the Princess from  
the charge

Of being his co-rebels?

*Bagenhall.* Ay, but then  
What such a one as Wyatt says is  
nothing;

We have no men among us. The  
new lords 80

Are quieted with their sop of Abbey-  
lands,

And even before the Queen's face Gar-  
diner buys them

With Philip's gold. All greed, no  
faith, no courage!

Why, even the haughty prince, North-  
umberland,

The leader of our Reformation, knelt  
And blubber'd like a lad, and on the  
scaffold

Recanted, and resold himself to Rome.

*Stafford.* I swear you do your  
country wrong, Sir Ralph.

I know a set of exiles over there,  
Dare-devils, that would eat fire and  
spit it out 90

At Philip's beard; they pillage Spain  
already.

The French King winks at it. An  
hour will come

When they will sweep her from the  
seas. No men?

Did not Lord Suffolk die like a true  
man?

Is not Lord William Howard a true man?

Yea, you yourself, altho' you are black-blooded;

And I, by God, believe myself a man.  
Ay, even in the church there is a man —

Cranmer.

Fly would he not, when all men bade him fly.

And what a letter he wrote against the Pope!

There's a brave man, if any.

*Bagenhall.* Ay; if it hold.

*Crowd (coming on).* God save their Graces!

*Stafford.* *Bagenhall,* I see The Tudor green and white. (*Trumpets.*) They are coming now.

And here's a crowd as thick as her-ring-shoals.

*Bagenhall.* Be limpets to this pillar, or we are torn

Down the strong wave of brawlers.

*Crowd.* God save their Graces!

*Procession of Trumpeters, Javelinmen, etc.; then Spanish and Flemish Nobles intermingled.*

*Stafford.* Worth seeing, *Bagenhall!*

These black dog-Dons

Garb themselves bravely. Who's the long-face there,

Looks very Spain of very Spain?

*Bagenhall.* The Duke

Of Alva, an iron soldier.

*Stafford.* And the Dutchman,

Now laughing at some jest?

*Bagenhall.* William of Orange,

William the Silent.

*Stafford.* Why do they call him so?

*Bagenhall.* He keeps, they say, some secret that may cost

Philip his life.

*Stafford.* But then he looks so merry.

*Bagenhall.* I cannot tell you why they call him so.

[*The King and Queen pass, attended by Peers of the Realm, Officers of State, etc. Cannon shot off.*

*Crowd.* Philip and Mary, Philip and Mary!

Long live the King and Queen, Philip and Mary!

*Stafford.* They smile as if content with one another.

*Bagenhall.* A smile abroad is oft a scowl at home.

[*King and Queen pass on. Procession.*

*First Citizen.* I thought this Philip had been one of those black devils of Spain, but he hath a yellow beard.

*Second Citizen.* Not red like Iscariot's.

*First Citizen.* Like a carrot's, as thou say'st, and English carrot's better than Spanish licorice; but I thought he was a beast.

*Third Citizen.* Certain I had heard that every Spaniard carries a tail like a devil under his trunk-hose.

*Tailor.* Ay, but see what trunk-hoses! Lord! they be fine; I never stitch'd none such. They make amends for the tails.

*Fourth Citizen.* Tut! every Spanish priest will tell you that all English heretics have tails.

*Fifth Citizen.* Death and the devil — if he find I have one —

*Fourth Citizen.* Lo! thou hast call'd them up! here they come — a pale horse for Death, and Gardiner for the devil.

*Enter GARDINER (turning back from the procession.)*

*Gardiner.* Knave, wilt thou wear thy cap before the Queen?

*Man.* My lord, I stand so squeezed among the crowd

I cannot lift my hands unto my head.

*Gardiner.* Knock off his cap there, some of you about him!

See there be others that can use their hands.

Thou art one of Wyatt's men?

*Man.* No, my lord, no.

*Gardiner.* Thy name, thou knave?

*Man.* I am nobody, my lord.

*Gardiner (shouting).* God's passion! knave, thy name?

*Man.* I have ears to hear.

*Gardiner.* Ay, rascal, if I leave thee ears to hear.

Find out his name and bring it me (*to Attendant*).

*Attendant.* Ay, my lord.

*Gardiner.* Knave, thou shalt lose  
thine ears and find thy tongue,  
And shalt be thankful if I leave thee  
that.

[*Coming before the Conduit.*  
The conduit painted — the Nine Wor-  
thies — ay !

But then what's here ? King Harry  
with a scroll. <sup>160</sup>

Ha — Verbum Dei — verbum — Word  
of God !

God's passion ! do you know the knave  
that painted it ?

*Attendant.* I do, my lord.

*Gardiner.* Tell him to paint it out,  
And put some fresh device in lieu of  
it —

A pair of gloves, a pair of gloves, sir ; ha ?  
There is no heresy there.

*Attendant.* I will, my lord ;  
The man shall paint a pair of gloves.

I am sure —  
Knowing the man — he wrought it  
ignorantly,  
And not from any malice.

*Gardiner.* Word of God  
In English ! over this the brainless  
loons <sup>170</sup>

That cannot spell Esaias from Saint  
Paul,

Make themselves drunk and mad, fly  
out and flare

Into rebellions. I'll have their Bibles  
burnt.

The Bible is the priest's. Ay ! fellow,  
what !

Stand staring at me ! shout, you gap-  
ing rogue !

*Man.* I have, my lord, shouted till  
I am hoarse.

*Gardiner.* What hast thou shouted,  
knave ?

*Man.* Long live Queen Mary !

*Gardiner.* Knave, there be two.  
There be both King and Queen,  
Philip and Mary. Shout !

*Man.* Nay, but, my lord,  
The Queen comes first, Mary and  
Philip.

*Gardiner.* Shout, then, <sup>180</sup>  
Mary and Philip !

*Man.* Mary and Philip !

*Gardiner.* Now,  
Thou hast shouted for thy pleasure,  
shout for mine !

Philip and Mary !

*Man.* Must it be so, my lord ?

*Gardiner.* Ay, knave.

*Man.* Philip and Mary.

*Gardiner.* I distrust thee.

Thine is a half voice and a lean as-  
sent.

What is thy name ?

*Man.* Sanders.

*Gardiner.* What else ?

*Man.* Zerubbabel

*Gardiner.* Where dost thou live ?

*Man.* In Cornhill.

*Gardiner.* Where, knave, where ?

*Man.* Sign of the Talbot.

*Gardiner.* Come to me to-mor-  
row. —

Rascal ! — this land is like a hill of  
fire,

One crater opens when another shuts.  
But so I get the laws against the  
heretic, <sup>191</sup>

Spite of Lord Paget and Lord William  
Howard,

And others of our Parliament, re-  
vived,

I will show fire on my side — stake  
and fire —

Sharp work and short. The knaves  
are easily cowed.

Follow their Majesties.

[*Exit. The crowd following.*

*Bagenhall.* As proud as Becket

*Stafford.* You would not have him  
murder'd as Becket was ?

*Bagenhall.* No — murder fathers  
murder ; but I say

There is no man — there was one wo-  
man with us —

It was a sin to love her married,  
dead <sup>200</sup>

I cannot choose but love her.

*Stafford.* Lady Jane ?

*Crowd (going off).* God save their  
Graces !

*Stafford.* Did you see her die ?

*Bagenhall.* No, no ; her innocent  
blood had blinded me.

You call me too black-blooded — true  
enough,

Her dark, dead blood is in my heart,  
with mine.

If ever I cry out against the Pope

Her dark, dead blood that ever moves  
with mine

Will stir the living tongue and make  
the cry.

*Stafford.* Yet doubtless you can tell  
me how she died ?

*Bagenhall.* Seventeen — and knew  
eight languages — in music  
Peerless — her needle perfect, and her  
learning

Beyond the churchmen ; yet so meek,  
so modest,

So wife-like humble to the trivial  
boy

Mismatch'd with her for policy ! I  
have heard

She would not take a last farewell of  
him ;

She fear'd it might unman him for his  
end.

She could not be unmann'd — no, nor  
outwoman'd —

Seventeen — a rose of grace !  
Girl never breathed to rival such a

rose ;  
Rose never blew that equall'd such a

bud.

*Stafford.* Pray you go on.

*Bagenhall.* She came upon the scaf-  
fold,

And said she was condemn'd to die  
for treason ;

She had but follow'd the device of  
those

Her nearest kin ; she thought they  
knew the laws.

But for herself, she knew but little  
law,

And nothing of the titles to the  
crown ;

She had no desire for that, and wrung  
her hands,

And trusted God would save her thro'  
the blood

Of Jesus Christ alone.

*Stafford.* Pray you go on.

*Bagenhall.* Then knelt and said the  
Miserere Mei —

But all in English, mark you ; rose  
again,

And, when the headsman pray'd to be  
forgiven,

Said, ' You will give me my true crown  
at last,

But do it quickly ; ' then all wept but  
she,

Who changed not color when she saw  
the block,

But ask'd him, childlike, ' Will you  
take it off

Before I lay me down ? ' ' No, madam,'  
he said,

Gasping ; and when her innocent eyes  
were bound,

She, with her poor blind hands feeling  
— ' Where is it ?

Where is it ? ' — You must fancy that  
which follow'd,

If you have heart to do it !  
*Crowd (in the distance).* God save

their Graces !  
*Stafford.* Their Graces, our dis-  
graces ! God confound them !

Why, she's grown bloodier ! when I  
last was here,

This was against her conscience —  
would be murder !

*Bagenhall.* The ' Thou shalt do no  
murder,' which God's hand

Wrote on her conscience, Mary rubb'd  
out pale —

She could not make it white — and  
over that,

Traced in the blackest text of hell —  
' Thou shalt ! '

And sign'd it — Mary !  
*Stafford.* Phillip and the Pope

Must have sign'd too. I hear this le-  
gate's coming

To bring us absolution from the Pope  
The Lords and Commons will bow

down before him —  
You are of the house ? what will you

do, Sir Ralph ?  
*Bagenhall.* And why should I be

bolder than the rest,  
Or honest than all ?

*Stafford.* But, sir, if I —  
And over-sea they say this State of

yours  
Hath no more mortise than a tower of

cards ;  
And that a puff would do it — then

if I  
And others made that move I touched

upon,  
Back'd by the power of France, and

landing here,  
Came with a sudden splendor, shout,

and show,  
And dazzled men and deafen'd by some

bright  
Loud venture, and the people so un-  
quiet —

And I the race of murder'd Bucking-  
ham —

Not for myself, but for the kingdom  
— Sir,

I trust that you would fight along  
with us.

*Bagenhall.* No; you would fling  
your lives into the gulf.

*Stafford.* But if this Philip, as he's  
like to do,

Left Mary a wife-widow here alone,  
Set up a viceroy, sent his myriads  
hither 270

To seize upon the forts and fleet, and  
make us

A Spanish province; would you not  
fight then?

*Bagenhall.* I think I should fight  
then.

*Stafford.* I am sure of it.

Hist! there's the face coming on here  
of one

Who knows me. I must leave you.

Fare you well,

You'll hear of me again.

*Bagenhall.* Upon the scaffold.  
[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

## ROOM IN WHITEHALL PALACE

MARY. *Enter PHILIP and CARDINAL  
POLE.*

*Pole.* Ave Maria, gratia plena,  
benedicta tu in mulieribus!

*Mary.* Loyal and royal cousin, hum-  
blest thanks.

Had you a pleasant voyage up the  
river?

*Pole.* We had your royal barge, and  
that same chair,

Or rather throne of purple, on the  
deck.

Our silver cross sparkled before the  
prow,

The ripples twinkled at their diamond-  
dance,

The boats that follow'd were as glow-  
ing-gay

As regal gardens, and your flocks of  
swans

As fair and white as angels; and your  
shores 10

Wore in mine eyes the green of Para-  
dise.

My foreign friends, who dream'd us  
blanketed

In ever-closing fog, were much amazed  
To find as fair a sun as might have  
flash'd

Upon their lake of Garda fire the  
Thames;

Our voyage by sea was all but mir-  
acle;

And here the river flowing from the  
sea,

Not toward it — for they thought not  
of our tides —

Seem'd as a happy miracle to make  
glide —

In quiet — home your banish'd coun-  
tryman. 20

*Mary.* We heard that you were sick  
in Flanders, cousin.

*Pole.* A dizziness.

*Mary.* And how came you round  
again?

*Pole.* The scarlet thread of Rahab  
saved her life;

And mine, a little letting of the blood.

*Mary.* Well? now?

*Pole.* Ay, cousin, as the heathen  
giant

Had but to touch the ground, his force  
return'd —

Thus, after twenty years of banish-  
ment,

Feeling my native land beneath my  
foot,

I said thereto: 'Ah, native land of  
mine,

Thou art much beholden to this foot  
of mine, 30

That hastes with full commission from  
the Pope

To absolve thee from thy guilt of her-  
esy.

Thou hast disgraced me and attained  
me,

And mark'd me even as Cain, and I  
return

As Peter, but to bless thee; make me  
well.'

Methinks the good land heard me, for  
to-day

My heart beats twenty, when I see  
you, cousin.

Ah, gentle cousin, since your Herod's  
death, 10

How oft hath Peter knock'd at Mary's  
gate!

And Mary would have risen and let  
him in,

But, Mary, there were those within the  
house

Who would not have it.

*Mary.* True, good cousin Pole;  
And there were also those without the  
house

Who would not have it.

*Pole.* I believe so, cousin.  
State-policy and church-policy are con-  
joint,

But Janus-faces looking diverse ways.  
I fear the Emperor much misvalued  
me.

But all is well; 't was even the will  
of God,

Who, waiting till the time had ripen'd,  
now

Makes me His mouth of holy greeting.

'Hail,  
Daughter of God, and savor of the  
faith.

Sit benedictus fructus ventris tui!'

*Mary.* Ah, heaven!

*Pole.* Unwell, your Grace?

*Mary.* No, cousin, happy —  
Happy to see you; never yet so happy  
Since I was crown'd.

*Pole.* Sweet cousin, you forget  
That long low minster where you gave  
your hand

To this great Catholic King.

*Philip.* Well said, Lord Legate.

*Mary.* Nay, not well said; I thought  
of you, my liege,  
Even as I spoke.

*Philip.* Ay, madam; my Lord  
Paget

Waits to present our Council to the le-  
gate.

Sit down here, all; madam, between  
us you.

*Pole.* Lo, now you are enclosed with  
boards of cedar,  
Our little sister of the Song of Songs!  
You are doubly fenced and shielded  
sitting here

Between the two most high-set thrones  
on earth,

The Emperor's highness happily sym-  
boll'd by

The King your husband, the Pope's  
holiness

By mine own self.

*Mary.* True, cousin, I am happy.

When will you that we summon both  
our houses

To take this absolution from your lips,  
And be re-gather'd to the Papal fold?

*Pole.* In Britain's calendar the  
brightest day

Beheld our rough forefathers break  
their gods,

And clasp the faith in Christ; but  
after that

Might not Saint Andrew's be her hap-  
piest day?

*Mary.* Then these shall meet upon  
Saint Andrew's Day.

*Enter PAGET, who presents the Council.  
Dumb show.*

*Pole.* I am an old man wearied with  
my journey,

Even with my joy. Permit me to with-  
draw.

To Lambeth?

*Philip.* Ay, Lambeth has ousted  
Cranmer.

It was not meet the heretic swine  
should live

In Lambeth.

*Mary.* There or anywhere, or at all.

*Philip.* We have had it swept and  
garnish'd after him.

*Pole.* Not for the seven devils to  
enter in?

*Philip.* No, for we trust they parted  
in the swine.

*Pole.* True, and I am the Angel of  
the Pope.

Farewell, your Graces.

*Philip.* Nay, not here — to me;  
I will go with you to the waterside.

*Pole.* Not be my Charon to the  
counter-side?

*Philip.* No, my Lord Legate, the  
Lord Chancellor goes.

*Pole.* And unto no dead world, but  
Lambeth Palace,

Henceforth a centre of the living faith.  
[*Exeunt Philip, Pole, Paget, etc.*

*Manet MARY.*

*Mary.* He hath awaked! he hath  
awaked!

He stirs within the darkness!

O Philip, husband! now thy love to  
mine

Will cling more close, and those bleak  
manners thaw,

That make me shamed and tongue-tied  
in my love.

The second Prince of Peace —  
The great unborn defender of the  
Faith,

Who will avenge me of mine enemies —  
He comes, and my star rises. <sup>100</sup>

The stormy Wyatts and Northumber-  
lands,

The proud ambitions of Elizabeth,  
And all her fieriest partisans — are pale  
Before my star!

The light of this new learning wanes  
and dies;

The ghosts of Luther and Zuinglius  
fade

Into the deathless hell which is their  
doom

Before my star!

His sceptre shall go forth from Ind to  
Ind!

His sword shall hew the heretic peo-  
ples down! <sup>110</sup>

His faith shall clothe the world that  
will be his,

Like universal air and sunshine! Open,  
Ye everlasting gates! The King is  
here! —

My star, my son!

*Enter PHILIP, DUKE OF ALVA, etc.*

O, Philip, come with me!  
Good news have I to tell you, news to  
make

Both of us happy — ay, the kingdom  
too.

Nay, come with me — one moment!

*Philip (to Alva).* More than that;  
There was one here of late — William  
the Silent

They call him — he is free enough in  
talk,

But tells me nothing. You will be,  
we trust, <sup>120</sup>

Sometime the viceroy of those pro-  
vinces —

He must deserve his surname better.

*Alva.* Ay, sir;  
Inherit the Great Silence.

*Philip.* True; the provinces  
Are hard to rule and must be hardly  
ruled;

Most fruitful, yet, indeed, an empty  
rind,

All hollow'd out with stinging her-  
esies;

And for their heresies, Alva, they will  
fight;

You must break them or they break  
you.

*Alva (proudly).* The first.

*Philip.* Good!

Well, Madam, this new happiness of  
mine? [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter THREE PAGES.*

*First Page.* News, mates! a miracle,  
a miracle! news! <sup>131</sup>

The bells must ring; Te Deums must  
be sung;

The Queen hath felt the motion of her  
babe!

*Second Page.* Ay; but see here!

*First Page.* See what?

*Second Page.* This paper, Dickon.  
I found it fluttering at the palace  
gates: —

'The Queen of England is delivered  
of a dead dog!'

*Third Page.* These are the things  
that madden her. Fie upon it!

*First Page.* Ay; but I hear she hath  
a dropsy, lad,

Or a high-dropsy, as the doctors call it.

*Third Page.* Fie on her dropsy, so  
she have a dropsy! <sup>140</sup>

I know that she was ever sweet to me.

*First Page.* For thou and thine are  
Roman to the core.

*Third Page.* So thou and thine  
must be. Take heed!

*First Page.* Not I;

And whether this flash of news be  
false or true,

So the wine run, and there be revelry,  
Content am I. Let all the steeples  
clash,

Till the sun dance, as upon Easter  
Day. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III

#### GREAT HALL IN WHITEHALL

*At the far end a dais. On this three  
chairs, two under one canopy for  
MARY and PHILIP, another on the  
right of these for POLE. Under the  
dais on POLE's side, ranged along  
the wall, sit all the Spiritual Peers,  
and along the wall opposite all the*



*Temporal. The Commons on cross benches in front, a line of approach to the dais between them. In the foreground, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and other MEMBERS of the COMMONS.*

*First Member.* Saint Andrew's Day;  
sit close, sit close, we are friends.  
Is reconciled the word? the Pope  
again?

It must be thus; and yet, cocksboddy!  
how strange

That Gardiner, once so one with all  
of us

Against this foreign marriage, should  
have yielded

So utterly!—strange! but stranger  
still that he,

So fierce against the headship of the  
Pope,

Should play the second actor in this  
pageant

That brings him in; such a chameleon  
he!

*Second Member.* This Gardiner turn'd  
his coat in Henry's time; <sup>10</sup>  
The serpent that hath slough'd will  
slough again.

*Third Member.* Tut, then we all are  
serpents.

*Second Member.* Speak for yourself.  
*Third Member.* Ay, and for Gardi-

ner! being English citizen,  
How should he bear a bridegroom out  
of Spain?

The Queen would have him! being  
English churchman,

How should he bear the headship of  
the Pope?

The Queen would have it! Statesmen  
that are wise

Shape a necessity, as a sculptor  
clay,

To their own model.

*Second Member.* Statesmen that are  
wise

Take truth herself for model. What  
say you? <sup>20</sup>

[*To Sir Ralph Bagenhall.*  
*Bagenhall.* We talk and talk.

*First Member.* Ay, and what use to  
talk?

Philip's no sudden alien—the Queen's  
husband,

He's here, and King, or will be—yet,  
cocksboddy!

So hated here! I watch'd a hive of  
late;

My seven-years' friend was with me,  
my young boy;

Out crept a wasp, with half the swarm  
behind.

'Philip!' says he. I had to cuff the  
rogue

For infant treason.

*Third Member.* But they say that  
bees,

If any creeping life invade their hive  
Too gross to be thrust out, will build  
him round, <sup>30</sup>

And bind him in from harming of  
their combs.

And Philip by these articles is bound  
From stirring hand or foot to wrong

the realm.

*Second Member.* By bonds of bees-  
wax, like your creeping thing;

But your wise bees had stung him  
first to death.

*Third Member.* Hush, hush!  
You wrong the Chancellor. The  
clauses added

To that same treaty which the Em-  
peror sent us

Were mainly Gardiner's: that no for-  
eigner

Hold office in the household, fleet,  
forts, army; <sup>40</sup>

That if the Queen should die without  
a child,

The bond between the kingdoms be  
dissolved;

That Philip should not mix us any way  
With his French wars—

*Second Member.* Ay, ay, but what  
security,

Good sir, for this, if Philip—

*Third Member.* Peace—the Queen,  
Philip, and Pole. [*All rise, and stand.*

*Enter MARY, PHILIP, and POLE.*

[*Gardiner conducts them to the  
three chairs of state. Philip sits  
on the Queen's left, Pole on her*

*right.*

*Gardiner.* Our short-lived sun, be-  
fore his winter plunge,

Laughs at the last red leaf, and An-  
drew's Day.

*Mary.* Should not this day be held  
in after years <sup>49</sup>

More solemn than of old?

*Philip.* Madam, my wish  
Echoes your Majesty's.

*Pole.* It shall be so.

*Gardiner.* Mine echoes both your  
Graces'; (*aside*) but the Pope—  
Can we not have the Catholic Church  
as well

Without as with the Italian? if we  
cannot,

Why, then the Pope.

My lords of the upper house,  
And ye, my masters, of the lower  
house,

Presenting the whole body of this  
realm

Of England, and dominions of the  
same,

Do make most humble suit unto your  
Majesties,

In our own name and that of all the  
State,

That by your gracious means and in-  
tercession

Our supplication be exhibited 70  
To the Lord Cardinal Pole, sent here  
as legate



WHITEHALL

Do ye stand fast by that which ye  
resolved?

*Voices.* We do.

*Gardiner.* And be you all one mind  
to supplicate  
The legate here for pardon, and ac-  
knowledge 60

The primacy of the Pope?

*Voices.* We are all one mind.

*Gardiner.* Then must I play the  
vassal to this Pole. [*Aside.*

[*He draws a paper from under his  
robes and presents it to the King  
and Queen, who look through it  
and return it to him; then as-  
cends a tribune, and reads.*

We, the Lords Spiritual and Tem-  
poral,  
And Commons here in Parliament as-  
sembled,

From our most Holy Father Julius,  
Pope,

And from the Apostolic See of Rome;  
And do declare our penitence and grief  
For our long schism and disobedience,  
Either in making laws and ordinances  
Against the Holy Father's primacy,  
Or else by doing or by speaking aught  
Which might impugn or prejudice  
the same;

By this our supplication promising, &c  
As well for our own selves as all the  
realm,

That now we be and ever shall be  
quick,

Under and with your Majesties' au-  
thorities,

To do to the utmost all that in us lies  
Towards the abrogation and repeal

Of all such laws and ordinances made;  
Whereon we humbly pray your Ma-  
jesties,

As persons undefiled with our offence,  
So to set forth this humble suit of ours  
That we the rather by your interces-  
sion

90

May from the Apostolic See obtain,  
Thro' this most reverend father, abso-  
lution,

And full release from danger of all  
censures

Of Holy Church that we be fallen into,  
So that we may, as children penitent,  
Be once again received into the bosom  
And unity of Universal Church;  
And that this noble realm thro' after  
years

May in this unity and obedience 99  
Unto the holy see and reigning Pope  
Serve God and both your Majesties.

*Voices.* Amen. [*All sit.*

[*He again presents the petition to  
the King and Queen, who hand  
it reverentially to Pole.*

*Pole (sitting).* This is the loveliest  
day that ever smiled

On England. All her breath should,  
incense-like,

Rise to the heavens in grateful praise  
of Him

Who now recalls her to His ancient  
fold.

Lo! once again God to this realm  
hath given

A token of His more especial grace ;  
For as this people were the first of all  
The islands call'd into the dawning  
church

Out of the dead, deep night of hea-  
thendom, 110

So now are these the first whom God  
hath given

Grace to repent and sorrow for their  
schism ;

And if your penitence be not mock-  
ery,

O, how the blessed angels who rejoice  
Over one saved do triumph at this  
hour

In the re-born salvation of a land  
So noble !

[*A pause.*

For ourselves we do protest  
That our commission is to heal, not  
harm ;

We come not to condemn, but recon-  
cile ;

We come not to compel, but call  
again ; 120

We come not to destroy, but edify ;  
Nor yet to question things already  
done ;

These are forgiven— matters of the  
past—

And range with jetsam and with offal  
thrown

Into the blind sea of forgetfulness.

[*A pause.*

Ye have reversed the attainder laid on  
us

By him who sack'd the house of God ;  
and we,

Amplier than any field on our poor  
earth

Can render thanks in fruit for being  
sown,

Do here and now repay you sixty-  
fold, 130

A hundred, yea, a thousand thousand-  
fold,

With heaven for earth.

[*Rising and stretching forth his  
hands. All kneel but Sir Ralph  
Bagenhall, who rises and re-  
mains standing.*

The Lord who hath redeem'd us  
With His own blood, and wash'd us  
from our sins,

To purchase for Himself a stainless  
bride ;

He, whom the Father hath appointed  
Head

Of all His church, He by His mercy  
absolve you. 140

[*A pause.*

And we by that authority Apostolic  
Given unto us, his legate, by the Pope,  
Our Lord and Holy Father, Julius,  
God's Vicar and Vicegerent upon  
earth, 140

Do here absolve you and deliver you  
And every one of you, and all the  
realm

And its dominions from all heresy,  
All schism, and from all and every  
censure,

Judgment, and pain accruing there-  
upon ;

And also we restore you to the bosom  
And unity of Universal Church.

[*Turning to Gardiner.*

Our letters of commission will declare  
this plainlier.

[*Queen heard sobbing. Cries of  
Amen! Amen! Some of the  
Members embrace one another.*

*All but Sir Ralph Bagenhall pass out into the neighboring chapel, whence is heard the Te Deum.*

*Bagenhall.* We strove against the papacy from the first,  
In William's time, in our first Edward's time, <sup>150</sup>  
And in my master Henry's time; but now,  
The unity of Universal Church,  
Mary would have it; and this Gardiner follows.  
The unity of Universal Hell,  
Philip would have it; and this Gardiner follows!  
A Parliament of imitative apes!  
Sheep at the gap which Gardiner takes, who not  
Believes the Pope, nor any of them believe —  
These spaniel-Spaniard English of the time,  
Who rub their fawning noses in the dust, <sup>160</sup>  
For that is Philip's gold-dust, and adore  
This Vicar of their Vicar. Would I had been  
Born Spaniard! I had held my head up then.  
I am ashamed that I am Bagenhall, English.

*Enter OFFICER.*

*Officer.* Sir Ralph Bagenhall!

*Bagenhall.* What of that?

*Officer.* You were the one sole man in either house  
Who stood upright when both the houses fell.

*Bagenhall.* The houses fell!

*Officer.* I mean the houses knelt  
Before the legate.

*Bagenhall.* Do not scrimp your phrase,  
But stretch it wider; say when England fell. <sup>170</sup>

*Officer.* I say you were the one sole man who stood.

*Bagenhall.* I am the one sole man in either house,  
Perchance in England, loves her like a son.

*Officer.* Well, you one man, because you stood upright,

Her Grace the Queen commands you to the Tower.

*Bagenhall.* As traitor, or as heretic, or for what?

*Officer.* If any man in any way would be

The one man, he shall be so to his cost.

*Bagenhall.* What! will she have my head?

*Officer.* A round fine likelier.

Your pardon. [*Calling to Attendant.*

By the river to the Tower.

[*Exeunt.*

#### SCENE IV

WHITEHALL. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, GARDINER, POLE, PAGET, BONNER, *etc.*

*Mary.* The King and I, my lords, now that all traitors

Against our royal state have lost the heads

Wherewith they plotted in their treasonous malice,

Have talk'd together, and are well agreed

That those old statutes touching Lollardism

To bring the heretic to the stake, should be

No longer a dead letter, but re-quick-en'd.

*One of the Council.* Why, what hath fluster'd Gardiner? how he rubs

His forehead!

*Paget.* I have changed a word with him

In coming, and may change a word again. <sup>10</sup>

*Gardiner.* Madam, your Highness is our sun, the King

And you together our two suns in one; And so the beams of both may shine

upon us,  
The faith that seem'd to droop will

feel your light,  
Lift head, and flourish; yet not light

alone,  
There must be heat — there must be

heat enough  
To scorch and wither heresy to the

root.

For what saith Christ? 'Compel them to come in.'

And what saith Paul? 'I would they were cut off'

That trouble you.' Let the dead letter live!

Trace it in fire, that all the louts to whom

Their A B C is darkness, clowns and grooms

May read it! so you quash rebellion too,

For heretic and traitor are all one; Two vipers of one breed — an amphibæna,

Each end a sting. Let the dead letter burn!

*Paget.* Yet there be some disloyal Catholics,

And many heretics loyal; heretic throats

Cried no God-bless-her to the Lady Jane,

But shouted in Queen Mary. So there be

Some traitor-heretic, there is axe and cord.

To take the lives of others that are loyal,

And by the churchman's pitiless doom of fire,

Were but a thankless policy in this crown,

Ay, and against itself; for there are many.

*Mary.* If we could burn out heresy, my Lord Paget,

We reck not tho' we lost this crown of England —

Ay! tho' it were ten Englands!

*Gardiner.* Right, your Grace. Paget, you are all for this poor life of ours,

And care but little for the life to be.

*Paget.* I have some time, for curiousness, my lord,

Watch'd children playing at *their* life to be,

And cruel at it, killing helpless flies; Such is our time — all times for aught I know.

*Gardiner.* We kill the heretics that sting the soul —

They, with right reason, flies that prick the flesh.

*Paget.* They had not reach'd right reason, little children!

They kill'd but for their pleasure and the power

They felt in killing.

*Gardiner.* A spice of Satan, ha! Why, good! what then? granted! — we are fallen creatures;

Look to your Bible, Paget! we are fallen.

*Paget.* I am but of the laity, my lord bishop,

And may not read your Bible, yet I found

One day a wholesome scripture, 'Little children,

Love one another.'

*Gardiner.* Did you find a scripture, 'I come not to bring peace but a sword'?

The sword is in her Grace's hand to smite with.

*Paget,*

You stand up here to fight for heresy, You are more than guess'd at as a heretic,

And on the steep-up track of the true faith

Your lapses are far seen.

*Paget.* The faultless Gardiner!

*Mary.* You brawl beyond the question; speak, lord legate!

*Pole.* Indeed, I cannot follow with your Grace;

Rather would say — the shepherd doth not kill

The sheep that wander from his flock, but sends

His careful dog to bring them to the fold.

Look to the Netherlands, wherein have been

Such holocausts of heresy! to what end?

For yet the faith is not established there.

*Gardiner.* The end's not come.

*Pole.* No — nor this way will come,

Seeing there lie two ways to every end,

A better and a worse — the worse is here

To persecute, because to persecute Makes a faith hated, and is further-

more

No perfect witness of a perfect faith

In him who persecutes. When men  
are tost  
On tides of strange opinion, and not  
sure  
Of their own selves, they are wroth  
with their own selves,  
And thence with others; then, who  
lights the faggot?  
Not the full faith, no, but the lurking  
doubt.  
Old Rome, that first made martyrs in  
the Church,  
Trembled for her own gods, for these  
were trembling—  
But when did our Rome tremble?  
*Paget.* Did she not  
In Henry's time and Edward's?  
*Pole.* What, my lord!  
The Church on Peter's rock? never!  
I have seen  
A pine in Italy that cast its shadow  
Athwart a cataract; firm stood the  
pine—  
The cataract shook the shadow. To  
my mind,  
The cataract typed the headlong  
plunge and fall  
Of heresy to the pit; the pine was  
Rome.  
You see, my lords,  
It was the shadow of the Church that  
trembled;  
Your church was but the shadow of a  
church,  
Wanting the Papal mitre.  
*Gardiner* (*muttering*). Here be  
tropes.  
*Pole.* And tropes are good to clothe  
a naked truth,  
And make it look more seemly.  
*Gardiner.* Tropes again!  
*Pole.* You are hard to please.  
Then without tropes, my lord,  
An overmuch severeness, I repeat,  
When faith is wavering makes the  
waverer pass  
Into more settled hatred of the doc-  
trines  
Of those who rule, which hatred by  
and by  
Involves the ruler—thus there springs  
to light  
That Centaur of a monstrous Common-  
weal,  
The traitor-heretic;—then tho' some  
may quail,

Yet others are that dare the stake and  
fire,  
And their strong torment bravely  
borne begets  
An admiration and an indignation,  
And hot desire to imitate; so the  
plague  
Of schism spreads. Were there but  
three or four  
Of these misleaders, yet I would not  
say  
Burn! and we cannot burn whole  
towns; they are many,  
As my Lord Paget says.  
*Gardiner.* Yet, my Lord Cardinal—  
*Pole.* I am your legate; please you  
let me finish.  
Methinks that under our Queen's regi-  
men  
We might go softlier than with crim-  
son rowel  
And streaming lash. When Herod-  
Henry first  
Began to batter at your English  
Church,  
This was the cause, and hence the  
judgment on her.  
She seethed with such adulteries, and  
the lives  
Of many among your churchmen were  
so foul  
That heaven wept and earth blush'd.  
I would advise  
That we should thoroughly cleanse  
the Church within  
Before these bitter statutes be re-  
quicken'd.  
So after that when she once more is  
seen  
White as the light, the spotless bride  
of Christ,  
Like Christ himself on Tabor, possi-  
bly  
The Lutheran may be won to her  
again;  
Till when, my lords, I counsel toler-  
ance.  
*Gardiner.* What, if a mad dog bit  
your hand, my lord,  
Would you not chop the bitten finger  
off,  
Lest your whole body should madden  
with the poison?  
I would not, were I Queen, tolerate  
the heretic,  
No, not an hour. The ruler of a land

Is bounden by his power and place to  
see

His people be not poison'd. Tolerate  
them!

Why? do they tolerate you? Nay,  
many of them

Would burn — have burnt each other;  
call they not

The one true faith a loathsome idol-  
worship?

Beware, lord legate, of a heavier  
crime

Than heresy is itself; beware, I  
say, <sup>140</sup>

Lest men accuse you of indifference  
To all faiths, all religion; for you  
know

Right well that you yourself have  
been supposed

Tainted with Lutheranism in Italy.

*Pole (angered).* But you, my lord,  
beyond all supposition,

In clear and open day were congru-  
ent

With that vile Cranmer in the accursed  
lie

Of good Queen Catharine's divorce —  
the spring

Of all those evils that have flow'd  
upon us;

For you yourself have truckled to the  
tyrant, <sup>150</sup>

And done your best to bastardize our  
Queen,

For which God's righteous judgment  
fell upon you

In your five years of imprisonment,  
my lord,

Under young Edward. Who so bol-  
ster'd up

The gross King's headship of the  
Church, or more

Denied the Holy Father?

*Gardiner.* Ha! what! eh?  
But you, my lord, a polish'd gentle-  
man,

A bookman, flying from the heat and  
tussle,

You lived among your vines and  
oranges,

In your soft Italy yonder! You were  
sent for, <sup>160</sup>

You were appeal'd to, but you still  
prefer'd

Your learned leisure. As for what I  
did,

I suffer'd and repented. You, lord  
legate

And cardinal-deacon, have not now to  
learn

That even Saint Peter in his time of  
fear

Denied his Master, ay, and thrice, my  
lord.

*Pole.* But not for five-and-twenty  
years, my lord.

*Gardiner.* Ha! good! it seems then  
I was summon'd hither

But to be mock'd and baited. Speak,  
friend Bonner,

And tell this learned legate he lacks  
zeal. <sup>170</sup>

The Church's evil is not as the King's,  
Cannot be heal'd by stroking. The  
mad bite

Must have the cautery — tell him —  
and at once.

What wouldst thou do hadst thou his  
power, thou

That layest so long in heretic bonds  
with me?

Wouldst thou not burn and blast them  
root and branch?

*Bonner.* Ay, after you, my lord.

*Gardiner.* Nay, God's passion, be-  
fore me! speak!

*Bonner.* I am on fire until I see  
them flame.

*Gardiner.* Ay, the psalm-singing  
weavers, cobblers, scum — <sup>180</sup>

But this most noble prince Plantage-  
net,

Our good Queen's cousin — dallying  
over-seas

Even when his brother's, nay, his  
noble mother's,

Head fell —

*Pole.* Peace, madman!

Thou stirrest up a grief thou canst not  
fathom.

Thou Christian bishop, thou Lord  
Chancellor

Of England! no more rein upon thine  
anger

Than any child! Thou mak'st me  
much ashamed

That I was for a moment wroth at  
thee.

*Mary.* I come for counsel and ye  
give me feuds, <sup>190</sup>

Like dogs that, set to watch their  
master's gate,

Fall, when the thief is even within the walls,  
 To worrying one another. My Lord Chancellor,  
 You have an old trick of offending us ;  
 And but that you are art and part with us  
 In purging heresy, well we might, for this  
 Your violence and much roughness to the legate,  
 Have shut you from our counsels. Cousin Pole,  
 You are fresh from brighter lands. Retire with me.  
 His Highness and myself — so you allow us —  
 Will let you learn in peace and privacy  
 What power this cooler sun of England hath  
 In breeding godless vermin. And pray Heaven  
 That you may see according to our sight !  
 Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt Queen and Pole, etc.*]

*Gardiner.* Pole has the Plantagenet face,  
 But not the force made them our mightiest kings.  
 Fine eyes — but melancholy, irresolute —  
 A fine beard, Bonner, a very full fine beard.  
 But a weak mouth, an indeterminate — ha ?

*Bonner.* Well, a weak mouth, perchance.

*Gardiner.* And not like thine  
 To gorge a heretic whole, roasted or raw.

*Bonner.* I'd do my best, my Lord ;  
 but yet the legate  
 Is here as Pope and Master of the Church,  
 And if he go not with you —

*Gardiner.* Tut, Master Bishop,  
 Our bashful legate, saw'st not how he flush'd ?

Touch him upon his old heretical talk,  
 He'll burn a diocese to prove his orthodoxy.

And let him call me truckler. In those times,  
 Thou knowest we had to dodge, or duck, or die ;

I kept my head for use of Holy Church ;

And see you, we shall have to dodge again,

And let the Pope trample our rights, and plunge

His foreign fist into our island Church  
 To plump the leaner pouch of Italy.

For a time, for a time.

Why ? that these statutes may be put in force,

And that his fan may thoroughly purge his floor.

*Bonner.* So then you hold the Pope —

*Gardiner.* I hold the Pope !

What do I hold him ? what do I hold the Pope ?

Come, come, the morsel stuck — this Cardinal's fault —

I have gulpt it down. I am wholly for the Pope,

Utterly and altogether for the Pope,  
 The Eternal Peter of the changeless chair,

Crown'd slave of slaves, and mitred king of kings,

God upon earth ! what more ? what would you have ?

Hence, let's be gone.

*Enter USHER.*

*Usher.* Well that you be not gone,  
 My lord. The Queen, most wroth at first with you,

Is now content to grant you full forgiveness,

So that you crave full pardon of the legate.

I am sent to fetch you.

*Gardiner.* Doth Pole yield, sir, ha ?  
 Did you hear 'em ? were you by ?

*Usher.* I cannot tell you,  
 His bearing is so courtly-delicate ;  
 And yet methinks he falters ; their two Graces

Do so dear-cousin and royal-cousin him,

So press on him the duty which as legate

He owes himself, and with such royal smiles —

*Gardiner.* Smiles that burn men.  
 Bonner, it will be carried.

He falters, ha ? 'fore God, we change and change ;



Men now are bow'd and old, the doctors tell you,  
 At three-score years; then if we change at all <sup>250</sup>  
 We needs must do it quickly; it is an age  
 Of brief life, and brief purpose, and brief patience,  
 As I have shown to-day. I am sorry for it  
 If Pole be like to turn. Our old friend Cranmer,  
 Your more especial love, hath turn'd so often  
 He knows not where he stands, which, if this pass,  
 We two shall have to teach him; let 'em look to it,  
 Cranmer and Hooper, Ridley and Latimer,  
 Rogers and Ferrar, for their time is come,  
 Their hour is hard at hand, their 'dies iræ,' <sup>260</sup>  
 Their 'dies illa,' which will test their sect.  
 I feel it but a duty — you will find in it  
 Pleasure as well as duty, worthy Bonner, —  
 To test their sect. Sir, I attend the Queen  
 To crave most humble pardon — of her most  
 Royal, Infallible, Papal Legate-cousin.  
*[Exeunt.]*

## SCENE V

## WOODSTOCK

ELIZABETH, LADY IN WAITING.

*Elizabeth.* So they have sent poor Courtenay over-sea.

*Lady.* And banish'd us to Woodstock, and the fields.  
 The colors of our Queen are green and white;  
 These fields are only green, they make me gape.

*Elizabeth.* There's white-thorn, girl.  
*Lady.* Ay, for an hour in May.  
 But court is always May, buds out in masques,

Breaks into feather'd merriments, and flowers

In silken pageants. Why do they keep us here?

Why still suspect your Grace?

*Elizabeth.* Hard upon both.  
*[Writes on the window with a diamond.]*

Much suspected, of me <sup>10</sup>  
 Nothing proven can be.  
 Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.

*Lady.* What hath your Highness written?

*Elizabeth.* A true rhyme.

*Lady.* Cut with a diamond; so to last like truth.

*Elizabeth.* Ay, if truth last.

*Lady.* But truth, they say, will out;  
 So it must last. It is not like a word,  
 That comes and goes in uttering.

*Elizabeth.* Truth, a word!  
 The very Truth and very Word are one.

But truth of story, which I glanced at, girl,

Is like a word that comes from olden days, <sup>20</sup>

And passes thro' the peoples; every tongue

Alters it passing, till it spells and speaks

Quite other than at first.

*Lady.* I do not follow.

*Elizabeth.* How many names, in the long sweep of time  
 That so foreshortens greatness, may but hang

On the chance mention of some fool that once

Brake bread with us, perhaps; and my poor chronicle

Is but of glass. Sir Henry Bedingfield

May split it for a spite.

*Lady.* God grant it last,  
 And witness to your Grace's innocence, <sup>30</sup>

Till doomsday melt it!

*Elizabeth.* Or a second fire,  
 Like that which lately crackled underfoot

And in this very chamber, fuse the glass,

And char us back again into the dust

We spring from. Never peacock  
against rain

Scream'd as you did for water.

*Lady.* And I got it.  
I woke Sir Henry — and he's true to  
you —

I read his honest horror in his eyes.

*Elizabeth.* Or true to you?

*Lady.* Sir Henry Bedingfield!  
I will have no man true to me, your  
Grace,

But one that pares his nails; to me?  
the clown!

*Elizabeth.* Out, girl! you wrong a  
noble gentleman.

*Lady.* For, like his cloak, his man-  
ners want the nap  
And gloss of court; but of this fire he  
says,

Nay swears, it was no wicked wilful-  
ness,

Only a natural chance.

*Elizabeth.* A chance — perchance  
One of those wicked wilfuls that men  
make,

Nor shame to call it nature. Nay, I  
know

They hunt my blood. Save for my  
daily range

Among the pleasant fields of Holy  
Writ

I might despair. But there hath some  
one come;

The house is all in movement. Hence,  
and see. [*Exit Lady.*]

MILKMAID (*singing without*).

Shame upon you, Robin,

Shame upon you now!

Kiss me would you? with my hands

Milking the cow?

Daisies grow again,

Kingsups blow again,

And you came and kiss'd me milking the  
cow.

Robin came behind me,

Kiss'd me well, I vow.

Cuff him could I? with my hands

Milking the cow?

Swallows fly again,

Cuckoos cry again,

And you came and kiss'd me milking the  
cow.

Come, Robin, Robin,

Come and kiss me now;

Help it can I? with my hands

Milking the cow?

Kingdoves coo again,

All things woo again.

Come behind and kiss me milking the cow!

*Elizabeth.* Right honest and red-  
check'd; Robin was violent,  
And she was crafty — a sweet vio-  
lence,

And a sweet craft. I would I were a  
milkmaid,

To sing, love, marry, churn, brew,  
bake, and die,

Then have my simple headstone by the  
church,

And all things lived and ended hon-  
estly.

I could not if I would. I am Harry's  
daughter.

Gardiner would have my head. They  
are not sweet,

The violence and the craft that do di-  
vide

The world of nature; what is weak  
must lie.

The lion needs but roar to guard his  
young;

The lapwing lies, says 'here' when  
they are there.

Threaten the child, 'I'll scourge you  
if you did it;'

What weapon hath the child, save his  
soft tongue,

To say 'I did not'? and my rod's the  
block.

I never lay my head upon the pillow  
But that I think, 'Wilt thou lie there  
to-morrow?'

How oft the falling axe, that never  
fell,

Hath shock'd me back into the day-  
light truth

That it may fall to-day! Those damp,  
black, dead

Nights in the Tower; dead — with  
the fear of death

Too dead even for a death-watch!  
Toll of a bell,

Stroke of a clock, the scurrying of a  
rat

Affrighted me, and then delighted me,  
For there was life — And there was  
life in death —

The little murder'd princes, in a pale  
light,

Rose hand in hand, and whisper'd,  
'Come away!'<sup>100</sup>

The civil wars are gone for evermore;  
Thou last of all the Tudors, come  
away!

With us is peace!' The last? It was  
a dream;

I must not dream, not wink, but  
watch. She has gone,

Maid Marian to her Robin—by and  
by

Both happy! a fox may filch a hen by  
night,

And make a morning outcry in the  
yard;

But there's no Renard here to 'catch  
her tripping.'

Catch me who can; yet, sometime I  
have wish'd

That I were caught, and kill'd away  
at once<sup>110</sup>

Out of the flutter. The gray rogue,  
Gardiner,

Went on his knees, and pray'd me to  
confess

In Wyatt's business, and to cast my-  
self

Upon the good Queen's mercy; ay,  
when, my lord?

God save the Queen! My jailor—

*Enter* SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

*Bedingfield.* One, whose bolts,  
That jail you from free life, bar you  
from death.

There haunt some Papist ruffians here—  
about

Would murder you.

*Elizabeth.* I thank you heartily, sir,  
But I am royal, tho' your prisoner,  
And God hath blest or cursed me with  
a nose—<sup>120</sup>

Your boots are from the horses.

*Bedingfield.* Ay, my lady.  
When next there comes a missive from  
the Queen

It shall be all my study for one hour  
To rose and lavender my horsiness,  
Before I dare to glance upon your  
Grace.

*Elizabeth.* A missive from the  
Queen! last time she wrote,  
I had like to have lost my life. It takes  
my breath—

O God, sir, do you look upon your  
boots,

Are you so small a man? Help me!  
what think you,

Is it life or death?

*Bedingfield.* I thought not on my  
boots;<sup>130</sup>

The devil take all boots were ever  
made

Since man went barefoot! See, I lay  
it here,

For I will come no nearer to your  
Grace;

[*Laying down the letter.*  
And, whether it brings you bitter news

or sweet,  
And God hath given your Grace a nose

or not,  
I'll help you, if I may.

*Elizabeth.* Your pardon, then;  
It is the heat and narrowness of the

cage  
That makes the captive testy; with

free wing  
The world were all one Araby. Leave

me now,  
Will you, companion to myself, sir?

*Bedingfield.* Will I?  
With most exceeding willingness, I

will;<sup>141</sup>  
You know I never come till I be call'd.

[*Exit.*  
*Elizabeth.* It lies there folded; is

there venom in it?  
A snake—and if I touch it, it may

sting.  
Come, come, the worst!

Best wisdom is to know the worst at  
once. [*Reads.*

'It is the King's wish that you  
should wed Prince Philibert of Savoy.  
You are to come to Court on the in-  
stant; and think of this in your com-  
ing. 'MARY THE QUEEN.'

Think! I have many thoughts;<sup>152</sup>  
I think there may be bird-lime here for

me;  
I think they fain would have me from

the realm;  
I think the Queen may never bear a

child;  
I think that I may be some time the

Queen,  
Then, Queen indeed; no foreign prince

or priest  
Should fill my throne, myself upon the

steps.  
I think I will not marry any one,

Specially not this landless Philibert<sup>160</sup>  
Of Savoy; but, if Philip menace me,  
I think that I will play with Philib-  
bert, —

As once the Holy Father did with  
mine,  
Before my father married my good  
mother, —  
For fear of Spain.

*Enter LADY.*

*Lady.* O Lord! your Grace, your  
Grace,  
I feel so happy. It seems that we  
shall fly  
These bald, blank fields, and dance  
into the sun  
That shines on princes.

*Elizabeth.* Yet, a moment since,  
I wish'd myself the milkmaid singing  
here,  
To kiss and cuff among the birds and  
flowers — <sup>170</sup>

A right rough life and healthful.

*Lady.* But the wench  
Hath her own troubles; she is weep-  
ing now;  
For the wrong Robin took her at her  
word.

Then the cow kick'd, and all her milk  
was spilt.

Your Highness such a milkmaid?

*Elizabeth.* I had kept  
My Robins and my cows in sweeter  
order

Had I been such.

*Lady (stily).* And had your Grace a  
Robin?

*Elizabeth.* Come, come, you are chill  
here; you want the sun  
That shines at court; make ready for  
the journey. <sup>179</sup>

Pray God, we 'scape the sunstroke!  
Ready at once. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE VI

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

LORD PETRE and LORD WILLIAM  
HOWARD.

*Petre.* You cannot see the Queen.  
Renard denied her  
Even now to me.

*Howard.* Their Flemish go-between

And all-in-all. I came to thank her  
Majesty

For freeing my friend Bagenhall from  
the Tower;

A grace to me! Mercy, that herb-of-  
grace,

Flowers now but seldom.

*Petre.* Only now, perhaps,  
Because the Queen hath been three  
days in tears

For Philip's going — like the wild  
hedge-rose

Of a soft winter, possible, not prob-  
able,

However you have proven it.

*Howard.* I must see her.

*Enter RENARD.*

*Renard.* My lords, you cannot see  
her Majesty. <sup>11</sup>

*Howard.* Why, then the King! for  
I would have him bring it

Home to the leisure wisdom of his  
Queen,

Before he go, that since these statutes  
past,

Gardiner out-Gardiniers Gardiner in his  
heat,

Bonner cannot out-Bonner his own  
self —

Beast! — but they play with fire as  
children do,

And burn the house. I know that  
these are breeding

A fierce resolve and fixt heart-hate in  
men

Against the King, the Queen, the  
Holy Father, <sup>20</sup>

The faith itself. Can I not see him?

*Renard.* Not now.  
And in all this, my lord, her Majesty

Is flint of flint; you may strike fire  
from her,

Not hope to melt her. I will give  
your message.

[*Exeunt Petre and Howard.*]

*Enter PHILIP (musing).*  
*Philip.* She will not have Prince

Philibert of Savoy,  
I talk'd with her in vain — says she  
will live

And die true maid — a goodly crea-  
ture too.

Would *she* had been the Queen! yet  
she must have him.

She troubles England; that she  
breathes in England

Is life and lungs to every rebel  
birth 30

That passes out of embryo.  
Simon Renard ! —

This Howard, whom they fear, what  
was he saying ?

*Renard.* What your imperial father  
said, my liege,

To deal with heresy gentlier. Gardi-  
ner burns,

And Bonner burns ; and it would seem  
this people

Care more for our brief life in their  
wet land

Than yours in happier Spain. I told  
my lord

He should not vex her Highness ; she  
would say

These are the means God works with,  
that His church

May flourish.

*Philip.* Ay, sir, but in statesman-  
ship 40

To strike too soon is oft to miss the  
blow.

Thou knowest I bade my chaplain,  
Castro, preach

Against these burnings.

*Renard.* And the Emperor  
Approved you, and, when last he  
wrote, declared

His comfort in your Grace that you  
were bland

And affable to men of all estates,  
In hope to charm them from their  
hate of Spain.

*Philip.* In hope to crush all heresy  
under Spain.

But, Renard, I am sicker staying here  
Than any sea could make me passing  
hence, 50

Tho' I be ever deadly sick at sea ;  
So sick am I with biding for this  
child.

Is it the fashion in this clime for wo-  
men

To go twelve months in bearing of a  
child ?

The nurses yawn'd, the cradle gaped,  
they led

Processions, chanted litanies, clash'd  
their bells,

Shot off their lying cannon, and her  
priests

Have preach'd, the fools, of this fair  
prince to come,

Till, by Saint James, I find myself the  
fool.

Why do you lift your eyebrow at me  
thus ? 60

*Renard.* I never saw your Highness  
moved till now.

*Philip.* So weary am I of this wet  
land of theirs,

And every soul of man that breathes  
therein.

*Renard.* My liege, we must not  
drop the mask before

The masquerade is over —

*Philip.* Have I dropt it ?  
I have but shown a loathing face to  
you,

Who knew it from the first.

*Enter MARY.*

*Mary (aside).* With Renard. Still  
Parleying with Renard, all the day  
with Renard,

And scarce a greeting all the day for  
me —

And goes to-morrow. [*Exit Mary.*  
*Philip (to Renard, who advances to*

*him).* Well, sir, is there more ?  
*Renard (who has perceived the Queen).*

May Simon Renard speak a sin-  
gle word ? 70

*Philip.* Ay.

*Renard.* And be forgiven for it ?

*Philip.* Simon Renard  
Knows me too well to speak a single  
word

That could not be forgiven.

*Renard.* Well, my liege,  
Your Grace hath a most chaste and  
loving wife.

*Philip.* Why not ? The Queen of  
Philip should be chaste.

*Renard.* Ay, but, my lord, you  
know what Virgil sings,  
Woman is various and most muta-  
ble.

*Philip.* She play the harlot ! never.

*Renard.* No, sire, no,  
Not dream'd of by the rabidest gos-  
peller. 80

There was a paper thrown into the  
palace,

'The King hath wearied of his barren  
bride.'

She came upon it, read it, and then  
rent it,

With all the rage of one who hates a  
truth

He cannot but allow. Sire, I would have you —

What should I say, I cannot pick my words —

Be somewhat less — majestic to your Queen.

*Philip.* Am I to change my manners, Simon Renard,  
Because these islanders are brutal beasts?

Or would you have me turn a sonneteer,

And warble those brief-sighted eyes of hers?

*Renard.* Brief-sighted tho' they be,  
I have seen them, sire,  
When you perchance were trifling royally

With some fair dame of court, suddenly fill

With such fierce fire — had it been fire indeed

It would have burnt both speakers.

*Philip.* Ay, and then?

*Renard.* Sire, might it not be policy in some matter  
Of small importance now and then to cede

A point to her demand?

*Philip.* Well, I am going.

*Renard.* For should her love when you are gone, my liege,  
Witness these papers, there will not be wanting

Those that will urge her injury — should her love —

And I have known such women more than one —

Veer to the counterpoint, and jealousy  
Hath in it an alchemic force to fuse  
Almost into one metal love and hate, —  
And she impress her wrongs upon her Council,

And these again upon her Parliament —

We are not loved here, and would be then perhaps

Not so well holpen in our wars with France,

As else we might be — here she comes.

*Enter MARY.*

*Mary.* O Philip!  
Nay, must you go indeed?

*Philip.* Madam, I must.

*Mary.* The parting of a husband and a wife

Is like the cleaving of a heart; one half

Will flutter here, one there.

*Philip.* You say true, Madam.

*Mary.* The Holy Virgin will not have me yet

Lose the sweet hope that I may bear a prince.

If such a prince were born, and you not here!

*Philip.* I should be here if such a prince were born.

*Mary.* But must you go?

*Philip.* Madam, you know my father,

Retiring into cloistral solitude  
To yield the remnant of his years to heaven,

Will shift the yoke and weight of all the world

From off his neck to mine. We meet at Brussels.

But since mine absence will not be for long,

Your Majesty shall go to Dover with me,

And wait my coming back.

*Mary.* To Dover? no,  
I am too feeble. I will go to Greenwich,

So you will have me with you; and there watch

All that is gracious in the breath of heaven

Draw with your sails from our poor land and pass

And leave me, Philip, with my prayers for you.

*Philip.* And doubtless I shall profit by your prayers.

*Mary.* Methinks that would you tarry one day more —

The news was sudden — I could mould myself

To bear your going better; will you do it?

*Philip.* Madam, a day may sink or save a realm.

*Mary.* A day may save a heart from breaking too.

*Philip.* Well, Simon Renard, shall we stop a day?

*Renard.* Your Grace's business will not suffer, sire,

For one day more, so far as I can tell.

*Philip.* Then one day more to please her Majesty.

*Mary.* The sunshine sweeps across my life again.

O, if I knew you felt this parting,  
*Philip,*

As I do!

*Philip.* By Saint James I do protest,  
Upon the faith and honor of a Spaniard,

I am vastly grieved to leave your Majesty.

Simon, is supper ready?

*Renard.* Ay, my liege,  
I saw the covers laying.

*Philip.* Let us have it.  
[*Exeunt.*]

#### ACT IV

##### SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, CARDINAL POLE.

*Mary.* What have you there?

*Pole.* So please your Majesty,  
A long petition from the foreign exiles  
To spare the life of Cranmer. Bishop

Thirlby,  
And my Lord Paget and Lord William  
Howard,

Crave, in the same cause, hearing of  
your Grace.

Hath he not written himself—infatuated—

To sue you for his life?

*Mary.* His life? O, no;  
Not sued for that—he knows it were  
in vain.

But so much of the anti-papal leaven  
Works in him yet, he hath pray'd me  
not to sully

Mine own prerogative, and degrade  
the realm

By seeking justice at a stranger's hand  
Against my natural subject. King  
and Queen,

To whom he owes his loyalty after  
God,

Shall these accuse him to a foreign  
prince?

Death would not grieve him more. I  
cannot be

True to this realm of England and the  
Pope

Together, says the heretic.

*Pole.* And there errs;  
As he hath ever err'd thro' vanity. 19  
A secular kingdom is but as the body  
Lacking a soul; and in itself a beast.  
The Holy Father in a secular kingdom  
Is as the soul descending out of heaven  
Into a body generate.

*Mary.* Write to him, then.

*Pole.* I will.

*Mary.* And sharply, Pole.

*Pole.* Here come the Cranmerites!  
*Enter* THIRLBY, LORD PAGET, LORD  
WILLIAM HOWARD.

*Howard.* Health to your Grace!  
Good morrow, my Lord Cardi-  
nal;

We make our humble prayer unto  
your Grace

That Cranmer may withdraw to for-  
eign parts,

Or into private life within the realm.  
In several bills and declarations,  
madam, 30

He hath recanted all his heresies.

*Paget.* Ay, ay; if Bonner have not  
forged the bills. [*Aside.*]

*Mary.* Did not More die, and Fisher?  
he must burn.

*Howard.* He hath recanted, Madam.

*Mary.* The better for him.  
He burns in purgatory, not in hell.

*Howard.* Ay, ay, your Grace; but  
it was never seen

That any one recanting thus at full,  
As Cranmer hath, came to the fire on  
earth.

*Mary.* It will be seen now, then.

*Thirlby.* O madam, madam!  
I thus implore you, low upon my  
knees, 40

To reach the hand of mercy to my  
friend.

I have err'd with him; with him I  
have recanted.

What human reason is there why my  
friend

Should meet with lesser mercy than  
myself?

*Mary.* My Lord of Ely, this. After  
a riot

We hang the leaders, let their follow-  
ing go.

Cranmer is head and father of these  
heresies,

New learning as they call it; yea,  
may God

Forget me at most need when I forget  
Her foul divorce — my sainted mother  
— No ! — <sup>50</sup>

*Howard.* Ay, ay, but mighty doctors  
doubted there.  
The Pope himself waver'd; and more  
than one

Row'd in that galley — Gardiner to  
wit,

Whom truly I deny not to have been  
Your faithful friend and trusty coun-  
cillor.

Hath not your Highness ever read his  
book,

His tractate upon True Obedience,  
Writ by himself and Bonner?

*Mary.* I will take  
Such order with all bad, heretical  
books

That none shall hold them in his  
house and live, <sup>60</sup>

Henceforward. No, my lord.

*Howard.* Then never read it.  
The truth is here. Your father was  
a man

Of such colossal kinghood, yet so  
courteous,

Except when wroth, you scarce could  
meet his eye

And hold your own; and were he  
wroth indeed,

You held it less, or not at all. I say,  
Your father had a will that beat men  
down;

Your father had a brain that beat  
men down —

*Pole.* Not me, my lord.

*Howard.* No, for you were not here;  
You sit upon this fallen Cranmer's  
throne; <sup>70</sup>

And it would more become you, my  
Lord Legate,

To join a voice, so potent with her  
Highness,

To ours in plea for Cranmer than to  
stand

On naked self-assertion.

*Mary.* All your voices  
Are waves on flint. The heretic must  
burn.

*Howard.* Yet once he saved your  
Majesty's own life;

Stood out against the King in your  
behalf,

At his own peril.

*Mary.* I know not if he did;

And if he did I care not, my Lord  
Howard.

My life is not so happy, no such boon,  
That I should spare to take a heretic  
priest's, <sup>80</sup>

Who saved it or not saved. Why do  
you vex me?

*Paget.* Yet to save Cranmer were  
to serve the Church,

Your Majesty's I mean; he is effaced,  
Self-blotted out; so wounded in his  
honor,

He can but creep down into some dark  
hole

Like a hurt beast, and hide himself  
and die;

But if you burn him, — well, your  
Highness knows

The saying, 'Martyr's blood — seed of  
the Church.'

*Mary.* Of the true Church; but his  
is none, nor will be. <sup>90</sup>

You are too politic for me, my Lord  
Paget.

And if he have to live so loath'd a  
life,

It were more merciful to burn him  
now.

*Thirlby.* O, yet relent! O, madam,  
if you knew him

As I do, ever gentle, and so gracious,  
With all his learning —

*Mary.* Yet a heretic still.  
His learning makes his burning the  
more just.

*Thirlby.* So worshipt of all those  
that came across him;

The stranger at his hearth, and all his  
house —

*Mary.* His children and his concu-  
bine, belike. <sup>100</sup>

*Thirlby.* To do him any wrong was  
to beget

A kindness from him, for his heart  
was rich,

Of such fine mould that if you sow'd  
therein

The seed of Hate, it blossom'd Charity.

*Pole.* 'After his kind it costs him  
nothing,' there's

An old world English adage to the  
point.

These are but natural graces, my good  
bishop,

Which in the Catholic garden are as  
flowers,



But on the heretic dunghill only  
weeds.

*Howard.* Such weeds make dung-<sup>109</sup>  
hills gracious.

*Mary.* Enough, my lords.  
It is God's will, the Holy Father's will,  
And Philip's will, and mine, that he  
should burn.

He is pronounced anathema.

*Howard.* Farewell, madam,  
God grant you ampler mercy at your  
call

Than you have shown to Cranmer.

[*Ereunt* Lords.

*Pole.* After this,  
Your Grace will hardly care to over-  
look

This same petition of the foreign exiles  
For Cranmer's life.

*Mary.* Make out the writ to-night.  
[*Ereunt.*

## SCENE II

### OXFORD. CRANMER IN PRISON

*Cranmer.* Last night I dream'd the  
fagots were alight,  
And that myself was fasten'd to the  
stake,

And found it all a visionary flame,  
Cool as the light in old decaying  
wood;

And then King Harry look'd from out  
a cloud,

And bade me have good courage; and  
I heard

An angel cry, 'There is more joy in  
Heaven,' —

And after that, the trumpet of the  
dead.

[*Trumpets without.*  
Why, there are trumpets blowing  
now; what is it?

*Enter* FATHER COLE.

*Cole.* Cranmer, I come to question  
you again.

Have you remain'd in the true Catho-<sup>10</sup>  
lic faith

I left you in?

*Cranmer.* In the true Catholic  
faith,

By Heaven's grace, I am more and  
more confirm'd.

Why are the trumpets blowing, Fa-  
ther Cole?

*Cole.* Cranmer, it is decided by the  
Council

That you to-day should read your re-  
cantation

Before the people in Saint Mary's  
Church.

And there be many heretics in the  
town,

Who loath you for your late return to  
Rome,

And might assail you passing through  
the street,

And tear you piecemeal; so you have<sup>20</sup>  
a guard.

*Cranmer.* Or seek to rescue me. I  
thank the Council.

*Cole.* Do you lack any money?

*Cranmer.* Nay, why should I?  
The prison fare is good enough for  
me.

*Cole.* Ay, but to give the poor.

*Cranmer.* Hand it me, then!

I thank you.

*Cole.* For a little space, farewell;  
Until I see you in Saint Mary's Church.

[*Exit* Cole.

*Cranmer.* It is against all prece-  
dent to burn

One who recants; they mean to par-  
don me.

To give the poor — they give the poor  
who die.

Well, burn me or not burn me I am  
fixt;

It is but a communion, not a mass,

A holy supper, not a sacrifice;

No man can make his Maker — Villa  
Garcia.

*Enter* VILLA GARCIA.

*Villa Garcia.* Pray you write out  
this paper for me, Cranmer.

*Cranmer.* Have I not writ enough  
to satisfy you?

*Villa Garcia.* It is the last.

*Cranmer.* Give it me, then.

[*He writes.*  
*Villa Garcia.* Now sign.

*Cranmer.* I have sign'd enough,  
and I will sign no more.

*Villa Garcia.* It is no more than  
what you have sign'd already,

The public form thereof.

*Cranmer.* It may be so;  
I sign it with my presence, if I read it.

*Villa Garcia.* But this is idle of  
you. Well, sir, well,

You are to beg the people to pray for you ;

Exhort them to a pure and virtuous life ;

Declare the Queen's right to the throne ; confess

Your faith before all hearers ; and retract

That Eucharistic doctrine in your book.

Will you not sign it now ?

*Cranmer.* No, Villa Garcia, I sign no more. Will they have mercy on me ?

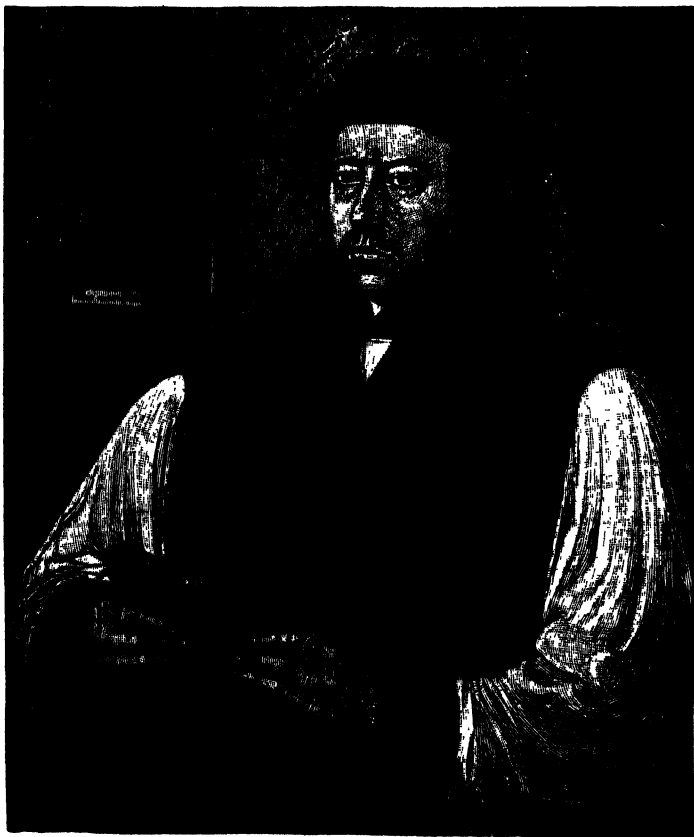
*Villa Garcia.* Have you good hopes of mercy ! So, farewell.

[*Exit.*

*Cranmer.* Good hopes, not theirs, have I that I am fixt, 51  
Fixt beyond fall ; however, in strange hours,

After the long brain-dazing colloquies,  
And thousand-times recurring argument

Of those two friars ever in my prison,  
When left alone in my despondency,  
Without a friend, a book, my faith would seem



CRANMER

Dead or half-drown'd, or else swam  
heavily  
Against the huge corruptions of the  
Church,  
Monsters of mistradition, old enough  
To scare me into dreaming. 'What  
am I, <sup>61</sup>  
Cranmer, against whole ages?' was  
it so,  
Or am I slandering my most inward  
friend,  
To veil the fault of my most outward  
foe —  
The soft and tremulous coward in the  
flesh ?  
O higher, holier, earlier, purer church,  
I have found thee and not leave thee  
any more.  
It is but a communion, not a mass —  
No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast !  
(Writes.) So, so ; this will I say —  
thus will I pray. <sup>70</sup>

[Puts up the paper.]

Enter BONNER.

Bonner. Good day, old friend ;  
what, you look somewhat worn ;  
And yet it is a day to test your health  
Even at the best. I scarce have spoken  
with you  
Since when ? — your degradation. At  
your trial  
Never stood up a bolder man than  
you ;  
You would not cap the Pope's com-  
missioner —  
Your learning, and your stoutness,  
and your heresy,  
Dumbfounded half of us. So, after  
that,  
We had to dis-archbishop and unlord,  
And make you simple Cranmer once  
again.  
The common barber clipt your hair,  
and I  
Scraped from your finger-points the  
holy oil ;  
And worse than all, you had to kneel  
to me ;  
Which was not pleasant for you, Mas-  
ter Cranmer.  
Now you, that would not recognize  
the Pope,  
And you, that would not own the  
Real Presence,  
Have found a real presence in the  
stake,

Which frights you back into the an-  
cient faith ;

And so you have recanted to the  
Pope.

How are the mighty fallen, Master  
Cranmer ! <sup>90</sup>

Cranmer. You have been more  
fierce against the Pope than I ;  
But why fling back the stone he strikes  
me with ? [Aside.]

O Bonner, if I ever did you kindness —  
Power hath been given you to try  
faith by fire —

Pray you, remembering how your-  
self have changed,

Be somewhat pitiful, after I have  
gone,

To the poor flock — to women and to  
children —

That when I was archbishop held with  
me.

Bonner. Ay — gentle as they call  
you — live or die !

Pitiful to this pitiful heresy ? <sup>100</sup>

I must obey the Queen and Council,  
man.

Win thro' this day with honor to your-  
self,

And I'll say something for you — so  
— good-bye. [Exit.]

Cranmer. This hard coarse man of  
old hath crouch'd to me

Till I myself was half ashamed for  
him.

Enter THIRLBY.

Weep not, good Thirlby.

Thirlby. O, my lord, my lord !  
My heart is no such block as Bonner's  
is :

Who would not weep ?

Cranmer. Why do you so my-lord  
me,

Who am disgraced ?

Thirlby. On earth ; but saved in  
heaven

By your recanting.

Cranmer. Will they burn me,  
Thirlby ? <sup>110</sup>

Thirlby. Alas ! they will ! these  
burnings will not help

The purpose of the faith ; but my  
poor voice

Against them is a whisper to the roar  
Of a spring-tide.

Cranmer. And they will surely  
burn me ?

*Thirlby.* Ay ; and besides will have you in the church  
Repeat your recantation in the ears  
Of all men, to the saving of their souls,  
Before your execution. May God  
help you  
Thro' that hard hour !

*Cranmer.* And may God bless you,  
Thirlby !  
Well, they shall hear my recantation  
there. [*Exit Thirlby.*  
Disgrac'd, dishonor'd ! — not by them,  
indeed, <sup>121</sup>

By mine own self — by mine own  
hand !

O thin-skinn'd hand and jutting veins,  
't was you

That sign'd the burning of poor Joan  
of Kent ;

But then she was a witch. You have  
written much,

But you were never raised to plead  
for Frith,

Whose dogmas I have reach'd. He  
was deliver'd

To the secular arm to burn ; and three  
was Lambert ;

Who can foresee himself ? truly these  
burnings,

As Thirlby says, are profitless to the  
burners, <sup>130</sup>

And help the other side. You shall  
burn too,

Burn first when I am burnt.  
Fire — inch by inch to die in agony !

Latimer  
Had a brief end — not Ridley. Hooper  
burn'd

Three-quarters of an hour. Will my  
fagots

Be wet as his were ? It is a day of  
rain.

I will not muse upon it.  
My fancy takes the burner's part, and  
makes

The fire seem even crueller than it  
is.

No, I not doubt that God will give me  
strength, <sup>140</sup>

Albeit I have denied Him.

*Enter SOTO and VILLA GARCIA.*  
*Villa Garcia.* We are ready

To take you to Saint Mary's, Master  
Cranmer.

*Cranmer.* And I. Lead on ; ye loose  
me from my bonds. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III

## ST. MARY'S CHURCH

*COLE in the Pulpit, LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME presiding. LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, LORD PAGET, and others. CRANMER enters between SOTO and VILLA GARCIA, and the whole Choir strike up, 'Nunc Dimittis.' CRANMER is set upon a Scaffold before the people.*

*Cole.* Behold him —

[*A pause : people in the foreground.*  
*People.* O, unhappy sight !

*First Protestant.* See how the tears  
run down his fatherly face.

*Second Protestant.* James, didst thou  
ever see a carrion crow

Stand watching a sick beast before he  
dies ?

*First Protestant.* Him perch'd up  
there ? I wish some thunderbolt  
Would make this Cole a cinder, pulpit  
and all.

*Cole.* Behold him, brethren ; he hath  
cause to weep ! —

So have we all. Weep with him if ye  
will,

Yet — <sup>10</sup>  
It is expedient for one man to die,

Yea, for the people, lest the people  
die.

Yet wherefore should he die that hath  
return'd

To the one Catholic Universal Church,  
Repentant of his errors ?

*Protestant Murmurs.* Ay, tell us  
that.

*Cole.* Those of the wrong side will  
despise the man,

Deeming him one that thro' the fear  
of death

Gave up his cause, except he seal his  
faith

In sight of all with flaming martyr-  
dom.

*Cranmer.* Ay. <sup>20</sup>  
*Cole.* Ye hear him, and albeit there  
may seem

According to the canons pardon due  
To him that so repents, yet are there

causes  
Wherefore our Queen and Council at  
this time

Adjudge him to the death. He hath  
been a traitor,  
A shaker and confounder of the realm;  
And when the King's divorce was  
sued at Rome,

He here, this heretic metropolitan,  
As if he had been the Holy Father, sat  
And judged it. Did I call him here-  
tic?

A huge heresiarch? never was it  
known

That any man so writing, preaching  
so,

So poisoning the Church, so long con-  
tinuing,

Hath found his pardon; therefore he  
must die,

For warning and example.

Other reasons  
There be for this man's ending, which  
our Queen

And Council at this present deem it  
not

Expedient to be known.

*Protestant Murmurs.* I warrant  
you.

*Cole.* Take therefore, all, example  
by this man,

For if our Holy Queen not pardon  
him,

Much less shall others in like cause  
escape,

That all of you, the highest as the  
lowest,

May learn there is no power against  
the Lord.

There stands a man, once of so high  
degree,

Chief prelate of our Church, arch-  
bishop, first

In Council, second person in the  
realm,

Friend for so long time of a mighty  
King;

And now ye see downfallen and de-  
based

From councillor to caitiff — fallen so  
low,

The leprous flutterings of the byway,  
scum

And offal of the city, would not  
change

Estates with him; in brief, so miser-  
able

There is no hope of better left for him,  
No place for worse.

Yet, Cranmer, be thou glad.  
This is the work of God. He is glo-  
rified

In thy conversation; lo! thou art re-  
claim'd;

He brings thee home; nor fear but  
that to-day

Thou shalt receive the penitent thief's  
award,

And be with Christ the Lord in Para-  
dise.

Remember how God made the fierce  
fire seem

To those three children like a pleasant  
dew.

Remember, too,  
The triumph of Saint Andrew on his  
cross,

The patience of Saint Lawrence in the  
fire.

Thus, if thou call on God and all the  
Saints

God will beat down the fury of the  
flame,

Or give thee saintly strength to un-  
dergo.

And for thy soul shall masses here be  
sung

By every priest in Oxford. Pray for  
him.

*Cranmer.* Ay, one and all, dear  
brothers, pray for me;

Pray with one breath, one heart, one  
soul for me.

*Cole.* And now, lest any one among  
you doubt

The man's conversation and remorse  
of heart,

Yourselves shall hear him speak.  
Speak, Master Cranmer,

Fulfil your promise made me, and pro-  
claim

Your true undoubted faith, that all  
may hear.

*Cranmer.* And that I will. O God,  
Father of Heaven!

O Son of God, Redeemer of the world!

O Holy Ghost, proceeding from them  
both!

Three persons and one God, have  
mercy on me,

Most miserable sinner, wretched man!

I have offended against heaven and  
earth

More grievously than any tongue can  
tell.

Then whither should I flee for any help ?

I am ashamed to lift my eyes to heaven,

And I can find no refuge upon earth.  
Shall I despair then ?— God forbid !  
O God,

For Thou art merciful, refusing none  
That come to Thee for succor, unto Thee,

Therefore, I come ; humble myself to Thee ;

Saying, O Lord God, although my sins be great,

For Thy great mercy have mercy ! O God the Son,

Not for slight faults alone, when Thou becamest

Man in the flesh, was the great mystery wrought ;

O God the Father, not for little sins  
Didst Thou yield up Thy Son to human death !

But for the greatest sin that can be sinn'd,

Yea, even such as mine, incalculable,  
Unpardonable, — sin against the light,  
The truth of God, which I had proven  
and known.

Thy mercy must be greater than all sin.

Forgive me, Father, for no merit of mine,

But that Thy name by man be glorified,

And Thy most blessed Son's, who died for man.

Good people, every man at time of death

Would fain set forth some saying that may live

After his death and better humankind ;  
For death gives life's last word a

power to live,  
And, like the stone-cut epitaph, remain

After the vanish'd voice, and speak to men.

God grant me grace to glorify my God !

And first I say it is a grievous case,  
Many so dote upon this bubble world,  
Whose colors in a moment break and

fly,  
They care for nothing else. What

saith Saint John ?

'Love of this world is hatred against God.'

Again, I pray you all that, next to God,

You do un murmuringly and willingly  
Obey your King and Queen, and not for dread

Of these alone, but from the fear of Him

Whose ministers they be to govern you.

Thirdly, I pray you all to live together  
Like brethren ; yet what hatred Christian men

Bear to each other, seeming not as brethren,

But mortal foes ! But do you good to all

As much as in you lieth. Hurt no man more

Than you would harm your loving natural brother

Of the same roof, same breast. If any do,

Albeit he think himself at home with God,

Of this be sure, he is whole worlds away.

*Protestant Murmurs.* What sort of brothers then be those that lust

To burn each other ?

*Williams.* Peace among you, there !  
*Cranmer.* Fourthly, to those that own exceeding wealth,

Remember that sore saying spoken once

By Him that was the truth, 'How hard it is

For the rich man to enter into heaven !'

Let all rich men remember that hard word.

I have not time for more ; if ever, now  
Let them flow forth in charity, seeing now

The poor so many, and all food so dear.

Long have I lain in prison, yet have heard

Of all their wretchedness. Give to the poor,

Ye give to God. He is with us in the poor.

And now, and forasmuch as I have come

To the last end of life, and thereupon  
Hangs all my past, and all my life to be,

Either to live with Christ in heaven  
with joy,  
Or to be still in pain with devils in  
hell;

And, seeing in a moment I shall find

[*Pointing upwards.*

Heaven or else hell ready to swallow  
me,

150

[*Pointing downwards.*

I shall declare to you my very faith  
Without all color.

*Cole.* Hear him, my good brethren.

*Cranmer.* I do believe in God, Fa-  
ther of all;

In every article of the Catholic faith,  
And every syllable taught us by our  
Lord,

His prophets, and apostles, in the  
Testaments,

Both Old and New.

*Cole.* Be plainer, Master Cranmer.

*Cranmer.* And now I come to the  
great cause that weighs

Upon my conscience more than any-  
thing

159

Or said or done in all my life by me;  
For there be writings I have set abroad  
Against the truth I knew within my  
heart,

Written for fear of death, to save my  
life,

If that might be; the papers by my  
hand

Sign'd since my degradation — by this  
hand

[*Holding out his right hand.*

Written and sign'd — I here renounce  
them all;

And, since my hand offended, having  
written

Against my heart, my hand shall first  
be burnt,

So I may come to the fire.

[*Dead silence.*

PROTESTANT MURMURS.

*First Protestant.* I knew it would  
be so.

*Second Protestant.* Our prayers are  
heard!

170

*Third Protestant.* God bless him!

CATHOLIC MURMURS.

Out upon him! out upon him!  
Liar! dissembler! traitor! to the fire!

*Williams (raising his voice).* You  
know that you recanted all you  
said

Touching the sacrament in that same  
book

You wrote against my Lord of Win-  
chester;

Dissemble not; play the plain Chris-  
tian man.

*Cranmer.* Alas, my lord,  
I have been a man loved plainness all  
my life;

I *did* dissemble, but the hour has come  
For utter truth and plainness; where-

fore, I say,

180

I hold by all I wrote within that book.  
Moreover,

As for the Pope, I count him Anti-  
christ,

With all his devil's doctrines, and re-  
fuse,

Reject him, and abhor him. I have  
said.

[*Cries on all sides.* 'Pull him down!  
Away with him!']

*Cole.* Ay, stop the heretic's mouth!  
Hale him away!

*Williams.* Harm him not, harm him  
not! have him to the fire!

[*Cranmer goes out between Two  
Friars, smiling; hands are  
reached to him from the crowd.  
Lord William Howard and Lord  
Paget are left alone in the  
church.*

*Paget.* The nave and aisles all empty  
as a fool's jest!

No, here's Lord William Howard.  
What, my lord,

190

You have not gone to see the burning?  
*Howard.* Fie!

To stand at ease, and stare as at a  
show,

And watch a good man burn. Never  
again.

I saw the deaths of Latimer and Rid-  
ley.

Moreover, tho' a Catholic, I would not,  
For the pure honor of our common  
nature,

Hear what I might — another recanta-  
tion

Of Cranmer at the stake.

*Paget.* You'd not hear that.  
He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd

upright;

His eye was like a soldier's, whom the  
general

200

He looks to and he leans on as his God,

Hath rated for some backwardness and bidden him

Charge one against a thousand, and the man

Hurls his soil'd life against the pikes and dies.

*Howard.* Yet that he might not after all those papers  
Of recantation yield again, who knows?

*Paget.* Papers of recantation! Think you then  
That Cranmer read all papers that he sign'd?

Or sign'd all those they tell us that he sign'd?

Nay, I trow not; and you shall see, my Lord, 210

That howsoever hero-like the man  
Dies in the fire, this Bonner or another

Will in some lying fashion misreport  
His ending to the glory of their church.  
And you saw Latimer and Ridley die?  
Latimer was eighty, was he not? his best

Of life was over then.

*Howard.* His eighty years  
Look'd somewhat crooked on him in his frieze;

But after they had stript him to his shroud,

He stood upright, a lad of twenty-one, 220

And gather'd with his hands the starting flame,

And wash'd his hands and all his face therein,

Until the powder suddenly blew him dead.

Ridley was longer burning; but he died

As manfully and boldly, and, 'fore God,

I know them heretics, but right English ones.

If ever, as heaven grant, we clash with Spain,

Our Ridley-soldiers and our Latimer-sailors

Will teach her something.

*Paget.* Your mild legate Pole  
Will tell you that the devil helpt them thro' it. 230

[*A murmur of the Crowd in the distance.*]

Hark, how those Roman wolf-dogs howl and bay him!

*Howard.* Might it not be the other side rejoicing

In his brave end?

*Paget.* They are too crush'd, too broken,

They can but weep in silence.

*Howard.* Ay, ay, Paget,  
They have brought it in large measure on themselves.

Have I not heard them mock the blessed Host

In songs so lewd the beast might roar his claim

To being in God's image, more than they?

Have I not seen the gamekeeper, the groom,

Gardener, and huntsman, in the parson's place, 240

The parson from his own spire swung out dead,

And Ignorance crying in the streets, and all men

Regarding her? I say they have drawn the fire

On their own heads; yet, Paget, I do hold

The Catholic, if he have the greater right,

Hath been the crueller.

*Paget.* Action and reaction,  
The miserable see-saw of our child-

world,

Make us despise it at odd hours, my lord.

Heaven help that this reaction not react 249

Yet fiercelier under Queen Elizabeth  
So that she come to rule us.

*Howard.* The world's mad.  
*Paget.* My Lord, the world is like a drunken man,

Who cannot move straight to his end, but reels

Now to the right, then as far to the left,

Push'd by the crowd beside — and underfoot

An earthquake; for since Henry for a doubt —

Which a young lust had clapt upon the back,

Crying, 'Forward!' — set our old church rocking, men



Have hardly known what to believe,  
 or whether  
 They should believe in anything; the  
 currents <sup>260</sup>  
 So shift and change, they see not how  
 they are borne,  
 Nor whither. I conclude the King a  
 beast;  
 Verily a lion if you will — the world  
 A most obedient beast and fool — my-  
 self  
 Half beast and fool as appertaining  
 to it;  
 Altho' your lordship hath as little of  
 each  
 Cleaving to your original Adam-clay  
 As may be consonant with mortal-  
 ity.

*Howard.* We talk and Cranmer  
 suffers.  
 The kindest man I ever knew; see,  
 see, <sup>270</sup>  
 I speak of him in the past. Unhappy  
 land!  
 Hard-natured Queen, half-Spanish in  
 herself,  
 And grafted on the hard-grain'd stock  
 of Spain —  
 Her life, since Philip left her, and she  
 lost  
 Her fierce desire of bearing him a  
 child,  
 Hath, like a brief and bitter winter's  
 day,  
 Gone narrowing down and darkening  
 to a close.  
 There will be more conspiracies, I  
 fear.

*Paget.* Ay, ay, beware of France.  
*Howard.* O Paget, Paget!  
 I have seen heretics of the poorer  
 sort, <sup>280</sup>  
 Expectant of the rack from day to  
 day,  
 To whom the fire were welcome, lying  
 chain'd  
 In breathless dungeons over steaming  
 sewers,  
 Fed with rank bread that crawl'd  
 upon the tongue,  
 And putrid water, every drop a  
 worm,  
 Until they died of rotted limbs; and  
 then  
 Cast on the dunghill naked, and be-  
 come

Hideously alive again from head to  
 heel,  
 Made even the carrion-nosing mongrel  
 vomit

With hate and horror.

*Paget.* Nay, you sicken *me*  
 To hear you.

*Howard.* Fancy-sick; these things  
 are done, <sup>291</sup>  
 Done right against the promise of this  
 Queen

Twice given.

*Paget.* No faith with heretics, my  
 lord!

Hist! there be two old gossips — gos-  
 pellers,

I take it; stand behind the pillar here;  
 I warrant you they talk about the  
 burning.

*Enter TWO OLD WOMEN.* JOAN, and  
 after her TIB.

*Joan.* Why, it be Tib!

*Tib.* I cum behind tha, gall, and  
 couldn't make tha hear. Eh, the  
 wind and the wet! What a day,  
 what a day! nigh upo' judgment  
 daay loike. Pwoaps be pretty things.  
 Joan, but they wunt set i' the Lord's  
 cheer o' that daay. <sup>304</sup>

*Joan.* I must set down myself, Tib;  
 it be a var waay vor my owld legs up  
 vro' Islip. Eh, my rheumatizy be  
 that bad howiver be I to win to the  
 burnin'?

*Tib.* I should saay 't wur ower by  
 now. I'd ha' been here avore, but  
 Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind,  
 and Dumble's the best milcher in  
 Islip. <sup>314</sup>

*Joan.* Our Daisy's as good 'z her.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Our Daisy's butter's as good  
 'z hern.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Our Daisy's cheeses be better.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Eh, then ha' thy waay wi'  
 me, Tib; ez thou hast wi' thy owld  
 man. <sup>324</sup>

*Tib.* Ay, Joan, and my owld man  
 wur up and awaay betimes wi' drie  
 hard eggs for a good plect at the  
 burnin'; and barrin' the wet, Hodge  
 'ud ha' been a-harrowin' o' white  
 peasen i' the outfield — and barrin' the  
 wind, Dumble wur blow'd wi' the

wind, so 'z we was forced to stick her, but we fetched her round at last. Thank the Lord therevore. Dumble's the best milcher in Islip. 335

*Joan.* Thou's thy way wi' man and beast, Tib. I wonder at tha, it beats me! Eh, but I do know ez Pwoaps and vires be bad things; tell 'ee now, I heerd summat as summun towld summun o' owld Bishop Gardiner's end; there wur an owld lord a-cum to dine wi' un, and a wur so owld a couldn't bide vor his dinner, but a had to bide howsomiver, vor 'I wunt dine,' says my Lord Bishop, says he, 'not till I hears ez Latimer and Ridley be a-vire;' and so they bided on and on till vour o' the clock, till his man cum in post vro' here, and tells un ez the vire has tuk holt. 'Now,' says the Bishop, says he, 'we'll gwo to dinner;' and the owld lord fell to's meat wi' a will, God bless un! but Gardiner wur struck down like by the hand o' God avore a could taste a mossel, and a set un all a-vire, so 'z the tongue on un cum a-lolluping out o' 'is mouth as black as a rat. Thank the Lord therevore! 360

*Paget.* The fools!

*Tib.* Ay, Joan; and Queen Mary gwoes on a-burnin' and a-burnin', to get her baaby born; but all her burnin's 'ill never burn out the hypocrisy that makes the water in her. There's nought but the vire of God's hell ez can burn out that.

*Joan.* Thank the Lord therevore!

*Paget.* The fools! 370

*Tib.* A-burnin', and a-burnin', and a-makin' o' volk madder and madder; but tek thou my word vor 't, Joan,—and I bean't wrong not twice i' ten year—the burnin' o' the owld archbishop 'll burn the Pwoap out o' this 'ere land vor iver and iver.

*Howard.* Out of the church, you brace of cursed crones, Or I will have you duck'd! (*Women hurry out.*) Said I not right?

For how should reverend prelate or throned prince 380

Brook for an hour such brute malignity?

Ah, what an acrid wine has Luther brew'd!

*Paget.* Pooh, pooh, my lord! poor garrulous country-wives.

Buy you their cheeses, and they'll side with you;

You cannot judge the liquor from the lees.

*Howard.* I think that in some sort we may. But see,

*Enter PETERS.*

Peters, my gentleman, an honest Catholic,

Who follow'd with the crowd to Cranmer's fire.

One that would neither misreport nor lie,

Not to gain paradise; no, nor if the Pope 390

Charged him to do it—he is white as death.

Peters, how pale you look! you bring the smoke

Of Cranmer's burning with you.

*Peters.* Twice or thrice The smoke of Cranmer's burning wrapt me round.

*Howard.* Peters, you know me Catholic, but English.

Did he die bravely? Tell me that, or leave

All else untold.

*Peters.* My lord, he died most bravely.

*Howard.* Then tell me all.

*Paget.* Ay, Master Peters, tell us.

*Peters.* You saw him how he past among the crowd;

And ever as he walk'd the Spanish friars 400

Still plied him with entreaty and reproach;

But Cranmer, as the helmsman at the helm

Steers, ever looking to the happy haven

Where he shall rest at night, moved to his death;

And I could see that many silent hands

Came from the crowd and met his own; and thus,

When we had come where Ridley burnt with Latimer,

He, with a cheerful smile, as one whose mind

Is all made up, in haste put off the rags

They had mock'd his misery with,  
 and all in white,  
 His long white beard, which he had<sup>410</sup>  
 never shaven  
 Since Henry's death, down-sweeping  
 to the chain  
 Wherewith they bound him to the  
 stake, he stood  
 More like an ancient father of the  
 Church  
 Than heretic of these times; and still  
 the friars  
 Plied him, but Cranmer only shook  
 his head,  
 Or answer'd them in smiling negatives;  
 Whereat Lord Williams gave a sudden  
 cry:—  
 'Make short! make short!' and so  
 they lit the wood.  
 Then Cranmer lifted his left hand to  
 heaven,<sup>420</sup>  
 And thrust his right into the bitter  
 flame;  
 And crying, in his deep voice, more  
 than once,  
 'This hath offended—this unworthy  
 hand!'  
 So held it till it all was burn'd, be-  
 fore  
 The flame had reach'd his body; I  
 stood near—  
 Mark'd him—he never uttered moan  
 of pain.  
 He never stirr'd or writhed, but, like  
 a statue,  
 Unmoving in the greatness of the  
 flame,  
 Gave up the ghost; and so past mar-  
 tyr-like—  
 Martyr I may not call him—past—  
 but whither?<sup>430</sup>  
*Paget.* To purgatory, man, to pur-  
 gatory.  
*Peters.* Nay, but, my lord, he de-  
 nied purgatory.  
*Paget.* Why then to heaven, and  
 God ha' mercy on him!  
*Howard.* Paget, despite his fearful  
 heresies,  
 I loved the man, and needs must  
 moan for him;  
 O Cranmer!  
*Paget.* But your moan is useless  
 now.  
 Come out, my lord, it is a world of  
 fools. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT V

SCENE I.—LONDON. HALL IN THE  
PALACE

QUEEN, SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

*Heath.* Madam,  
 I do assure you that it must be look'd  
 to.  
 Calais is but ill-garrison'd, in Guisnes  
 Are scarce two hundred men, and the  
 French fleet  
 Rule in the narrow seas. It must be  
 look'd to,  
 If war should fall between yourself  
 and France;  
 Or you will lose your Calais.

*Mary.* It shall be look'd to;  
 I wish you a good morning, good Sir  
 Nicholas.  
 Here is the King. [*Exit Heath.*  
*Enter PHILIP.*

*Philip.* Sir Nicholas tells you true,  
 And you must look to Calais when I  
 go.<sup>10</sup>

*Mary.* Go? must you go, indeed  
 —again—so soon?  
 Why, nature's licensed vagabond, the  
 swallow,  
 That might live always in the sun's  
 warm heart,  
 Stays longer here in our poor North  
 than you—  
 Knows where he nested—ever comes  
 again.

*Philip.* And, Madam, so shall I.  
*Mary.* O, will you? will you?  
 I am faint with fear that you will  
 come no more.

*Philip.* Ay, ay; but many voices  
 call me hence.

*Mary.* Voices—I hear unhappy  
 rumors—nay,  
 I say not, I believe. What voices  
 call you<sup>20</sup>

Dearer than mine that should be dear-  
 est to you?  
 Alas, my lord! what voices and how  
 many?

*Philip.* The voices of Castile and  
 Aragon,  
 Granada, Naples, Sicily, and Milan,  
 The voices of Franche-Comté, and the  
 Netherlands,  
 The voices of Peru and Mexico.

Tunis, and Oran, and the Philippines,  
And all the fair spice-islands of the  
East.

*Mary (admiringly).* You are the  
mightiest monarch upon earth,  
I but a little Queen; and so, indeed, 30  
Need you the more.

*Philip.* A little Queen! but when  
I came to wed your majesty, Lord  
Howard,  
Sending an insolent shot that dash'd  
the seas  
Upon us, made us lower our kingly  
flag  
To yours of England.

*Mary.* Howard is all English!  
There is no king, not were he ten  
times king,  
Ten times our husband, but must  
lower his flag  
To that of England in the seas of  
England.

*Philip.* Is that your answer?

*Mary.* Being Queen of England,  
I have none other.

*Philip.* So.

*Mary.* But wherefore not  
Helm the huge vessel of your State,  
my liege, 41  
Here by the side of her who loves you  
most?

*Philip.* No, madam, no! a candle  
in the sun  
Is all but smoke—a star beside the  
moon

Is all but lost; your people will not  
crown me—

Your people are as cheerless as your  
clime,

Hate me and mine; witness the brawls,  
the gibbets.

Here swings a Spaniard—there an  
Englishman;

The peoples are unlike as their com-  
plexion;

Yet will I be your swallow and re-  
turn — 50

But now I cannot bide.

*Mary.* Not to help me?  
They hate me also for my love to you,  
My Philip; and these judgments on  
the land —

Harvestless autumns, horrible agues,  
plague —

*Philip.* The blood and sweat of  
heretics at the stake

Is God's best dew upon the barren field.  
Burn more!

*Mary.* I will, I will; and you will  
stay?

*Philip.* Have I not said? Madam,  
I came to sue  
Your Council and yourself to declare  
war.

*Mary.* Sir, there are many English  
in your ranks 60  
To help your battle.

*Philip.* So far, good. I say  
I came to sue your Council and your-  
self

To declare war against the King of  
France.

*Mary.* Not to see me?

*Philip.* Ay, madam, to see you.  
Unalterably and pesteringly fond!

[*Aside.*

But soon or late you must have war  
with France;

King Henry warms your traitors at  
his hearth.

Carew is there, and Thomas Stafford  
there.

Courtenay, belike —

*Mary.* A fool and featherhead!

*Philip.* Ay, but they use his name.  
In brief, this Henry 70  
Stirs up your land against you to the  
intent

That you may lose your English heri-  
tage.

And then, your Scottish namesake  
marrying

The Dauphin, he would weld France,  
England, Scotland,

Into one sword to hack at Spain and  
me.

*Mary.* And yet the Pope is now  
colleagued with France;

You make your wars upon him down  
in Italy —

*Philip.* Can that be well?

*Philip.* Content you, madam;  
You must abide my judgment, and  
my father's,

Who deems it a most just and holy  
war. 80

The Pope would cast the Spaniard out  
of Naples;

He calls us worse than Jews, Moors,  
Saracens.

The Pope has push'd his horns beyond  
his mitre —

Beyond his province. Now,  
Duke Alva will but touch him on the  
horns,  
And he withdraws; and of his holy  
head—

For Alva is true son of the true  
Church—

No hair is harm'd. Will you not help  
me here?

*Mary.* Alas! the Council will not  
hear of war.

They say your wars are not the wars  
of England.

They will not lay more taxes on a  
land

So hunger-nipt and wretched; and  
you know

The crown is poor. We have given  
the church-lands back.

The nobles would not; nay, they  
clapt their hands

Upon their swords when ask'd; and  
therefore God

Is hard upon the people. What's to  
be done?

Sir, I will move them in your cause  
again,

And we will raise us loans and sub-  
sidies

Among the merchants; and Sir  
Thomas Gresham

Will aid us. There is Antwerp and  
the Jews.

*Philip.* Madam, my thanks.

*Mary.* And you will stay your  
going?

*Philip.* And further to discourage  
and lay lame

The plots of France, altho' you love  
her not,

You must proclaim Elizabeth your  
heir.

She stands between you and the Queen  
of Scots.

*Mary.* The Queen of Scots at least  
is Catholic.

*Philip.* Ay, madam, Catholic; but  
I will not have

The King of France the King of Eng-  
land too.

*Mary.* But she's a heretic, and,  
when I am gone,  
Brings the new learning back.

*Philip.* It must be done.  
You must proclaim Elizabeth your  
heir.

*Mary.* Then it is done; but you  
will stay your going  
Somewhat beyond your settled pur-  
pose?

*Philip.* No!

*Mary.* What, not one day?

*Philip.* You beat upon the rock.

*Mary.* And I am broken there.

*Philip.* Is this a place  
To wail in, madam? what! a public  
hall?

Go in, I pray you.

*Mary.* Do not seem so changed.  
Say go; but only say it lovingly.

*Philip.* You do mistake. I am not  
one to change.

I never loved you more.

*Mary.* Sire, I obey you.  
Come quickly.

*Philip.* Ay. [*Exit Mary.*]

*Enter COUNT DE FERIA.*

*Feria (aside).* The Queen in tears!

*Philip.* Feria!  
Hast thou not mark'd—come closer  
to mine ear—

How doubly aged this Queen of ours  
hath grown

Since she lost hope of bearing us a  
child?

*Feria.* Sire, if your Grace hath  
mark'd it, so have I.

*Philip.* Hast thou not likewise  
mark'd Elizabeth,

How fair and royal—like a queen,  
indeed?

*Feria.* Allow me the same answer  
as before—

That if your Grace hath mark'd her,  
so have I.

*Philip.* Good, now; methinks my  
Queen is like enough

To leave me by and by.

*Feria.* To leave you, sire?

*Philip.* I mean not like to live.  
Elizabeth—

To Philibert of Savoy, as you know,  
We meant to wed her; but I am not  
sure

She will not serve me better—so my  
Queen

Would leave me—as—my wife.

*Feria.* Sire, even so.

*Philip.* She will not have Prince  
Philibert of Savoy.

*Feria.* No, sire.

*Philip.* I have to pray you, some odd time,  
To sound the Princess carelessly on this;  
Not as from me, but as your phantasy;  
And tell me how she takes it.

*Feria.* Sire, I will.

*Philip.* I am not certain but that Philibert  
Shall be the man; and I shall urge his suit  
Upon the Queen, because I am not certain.

You understand, *Feria*.

*Feria.* Sire, I do.

*Philip.* And if you be not secret in this matter,  
You understand me there, too?

*Feria.* Sire, I do.

*Philip.* You must be sweet and supple, like a Frenchman.  
She is none of those who loathe the honeycomb.

[*Exit Feria.*]

*Enter RENARD.*

*Renard.* My liege, I bring you goodly tidings.

*Philip.* Well? 150

*Renard.* There *will* be war with France, at last, my liege;  
Sir Thomas Stafford, a bull-headed ass,  
Sailing from France, with thirty Englishmen,  
Hath taken Scarboro' Castle, north of York;  
Proclaims himself protector, and affirms

The Queen has forfeited her right to reign

By marriage with an alien — other things

As idle; a weak Wyatt! Little doubt  
This buzz will soon be silenced; but the Council —

I have talk'd with some already — are for war. 160

This is the fifth conspiracy hatch'd in France;

They show their teeth upon it; and your Grace,

So you will take advice of mine, should stay

Yet for a while, to shape and guide the event.

*Philip.* Good! Renard, I will stay then.

*Renard.* Also, sire,  
Might I not say — to please your wife, the Queen?

*Philip.* Ay, Renard, if you care to put it so.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

### A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, *sitting: a rose in her hand.*

LADY CLARENCE. ALICE *in the background.*

*Mary.* Look! I have play'd with this poor rose so long  
I have broken off the head.

*Lady Clarence.* Your Grace hath been

More merciful to many a rebel head  
That should have fallen, and may rise again.

*Mary.* There were not many hang'd for Wyatt's rising.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, not two hundred.

*Mary.* I could weep for them  
And her, and mine own self and all the world.

*Lady Clarence.* For her? for whom, your Grace?

*Enter USHER.*

*Usher.* The Cardinal.  
*Enter CARDINAL POLE (MARY rises).*

*Mary.* Reginald Pole, what news hath plagued thy heart?

What makes thy favor like the bloodless head 10

Fallen on the block, and held up by the hair?

*Philip?* —

*Pole.* No, Philip is as warm in life as ever.

*Mary.* Ay, and then as cold as ever.  
Is Calais taken?

*Pole.* Cousin, there hath chanced  
A sharper harm to England and to Rome

Than Calais taken. Julius the Third  
Was ever just, and mild, and father-like;

But this new Pope Caraffa, Paul the Fourth,

Not only reft me of that legateship

Which Julius gave me, and the legateship

Annex'd to Canterbury — nay, but, <sup>20</sup>  
worse —

And yet I must obey the Holy Father,  
And so must you, good cousin; —  
worse than all,

A passing bell toll'd in a dying ear —  
He hath cited me to Rome, for heresy,  
Before his Inquisition.

*Mary.* I knew it, cousin.  
But held from you all papers sent by  
Rome,

That you might rest among us, till  
the Pope,

To compass which I wrote myself to  
Rome,

Reversed his doom, and that you  
might not seem <sup>30</sup>

To disobey his Holiness.

*Pole.* He hates Philip;  
He is all Italian, and he hates the  
Spaniard;

He cannot dream that *I* advised the  
war;

Hestrikes thro' me at Philip and your-  
self.

Nay, but I know it of old, he hates me  
too;

So brands me in the stare of Chris-  
tendom

A heretic!

Now, even now, when bow'd before  
my time,

The house half-ruin'd ere the lease be  
out;

When I should guide the Church in  
peace at home, <sup>40</sup>

After my twenty years of banishment,  
And all my lifelong labor to uphold

The primacy — a heretic! Long ago,  
When I was ruler in the patrimony,

I was too lenient to the Lutheran,  
And I and learned friends among our-  
selves

Would freely canvass certain Luther-  
anisms.

What then, he knew I was no Lu-  
theran.

A heretic!

He drew this shaft against me to the  
head, <sup>50</sup>

When it was thought I might be cho-  
sen Pope,

But then withdrew it. In full con-  
sistory,

When I was made archbishop, he ap-  
proved me.

And how should he have sent me  
legate hither,

Deeming me heretic? and what heresy  
since?

But he was evermore mine enemy,  
And hates the Spaniard — fiery-chol-  
eric,

A drinker of black, strong, volcanic  
wines,

That ever make him fierier. I, a here-  
tic?

Your Highness knows that in pursu-  
ing heresy <sup>60</sup>

I have gone beyond your late Lord  
Chancellor, —

He cried 'Enough! enough!' before  
his death, —

Gone beyond him and mine own natu-  
ral man —

It was God's cause — so far they call  
me now

The scourge and butcher of their Eng-  
lish church.

*Mary.* Have courage, your reward  
is heaven itself.

*Pole.* They groan amen; they swarm  
into the fire

Like flies — for what? no dogma.  
They know nothing;

They burn for nothing.

*Mary.* You have done your  
best.

*Pole.* Have done my best, and as a  
faithful son, <sup>70</sup>

That all day long hath wrought his  
father's work,

When back he comes at evening hath  
the door

Shut on him by the father whom he  
loved,

His early follies cast into his teeth,  
And the poor son turn'd out into the

street

To sleep, to die — I shall die of it, cou-  
sin.

*Mary.* I pray you be not so discon-  
solate;

I still will do mine utmost with the  
Pope.

Poor cousin!  
Have not I been the fast friend of your  
life <sup>80</sup>

Since mine began, and it was thought  
we two

Might make one flesh, and cleave unto  
each other

As man and wife ?

*Pole.* Ah, cousin, I remember  
How I would dandle you upon my  
knee

At lisping-age. I watch'd you dancing  
once

With your huge father ; he look'd the  
Great Harry,

You but his cockboat ; prettily you did  
it,

And innocently. No — we were not  
made

One flesh in happiness, no happiness  
here ;

But now we are made one flesh in mis-  
ery ;

Our bridesmaids are not lovely — Dis-  
appointment,

Ingratitude, Injustice, Evil-tongue,  
Labor-in-vain.

*Mary.* Surely, not all in vain.  
Peace, cousin, peace ! I am sad at  
heart myself.

*Pole.* Our altar is a mound of dead  
men's clay,

Dug from the grave that yawns for us  
beyond ;

And there is one Death stands behind  
the groom,

And there is one Death stands behind  
the bride —

*Mary.* Have you been looking at the  
'Dance of Death' ?

*Pole.* No ; but these libellous papers  
which I found

Strewn in your palace. Look you here  
— the Pope

Pointing at me with 'Pole, the her-  
etic,

Thou hast burnt others, do thou burn  
thyself,

Or I will burn thee ;' and this other ;  
see ! —

'We pray continually for the death  
Of our accursed Queen and Cardinal  
Pole.'

This last — I dare not read it her.

*Mary.* [Aside.] Away !

Why do you bring me these ?  
I thought you knew me better. I never

read,  
I tear them ; they come back upon my

dreams.

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The hands that write them should be  
burnt clean off

As Cranmer's, and the fiends that utter  
them

Tongue-torn with pincers, lash'd to  
death, or lie

Famishing in 'black cells, while fam-  
ish'd rats

Eat them alive. Why do they bring  
me these ?

Do you mean to drive me mad ?

*Pole.* I had forgotten  
How these poor libels trouble you.

Your pardon,  
Sweet cousin, and farewell ! 'O bub-  
ble world,

Whose colors in a moment break and  
fly !'

Why, who said that ? I know not —  
true enough !

[Puts up the papers, all but the  
last, which falls. Exit Pole.]

*Alice.* If Cranmer's spirit were a  
mocking one,

And heard these two, there might be  
sport for him. [Aside.]

*Mary.* Clarence, they hate me ; even  
while I speak

There lurks a silent dagger, listening  
In some dark closet, some long gal-  
lery, drawn,

And panting for my blood as I go by.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, madam, there  
be loyal papers too,

And I have often found them.

*Mary.* Find me one !  
*Lady Clarence.* Ay, madam : but

Sir Nicholas Heath, the Chan-  
cellor,

Would see your Highness.

*Mary.* Wherefore should I see him ?  
*Lady Clarence.* Well, Madam, he

may bring you news from  
Philip.

*Mary.* So, Clarence.

*Lady Clarence.* Let me first put up  
your hair ;

It tumbles all abroad.

*Mary.* And the gray dawn  
Of an old age that never will be mine

Is all the clearer seen. No, no ; what  
matters ?

Forlorn I am, and let me look forlorn.

Enter SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

*Heath.* I bring your Majesty such  
grievous news

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I grieve to bring it. Madam, Calais is taken.

*Mary.* What traitor spoke? Here, let my cousin Pole

Seize him and burn him for a Lutheran. <sup>140</sup>

*Heath.* Her Highness is unwell. I will retire.

*Lady Clarence.* Madam, your Chancellor, Sir Nicholas Heath.

*Mary.* Sir Nicholas! I am stunn'd — Nicholas Heath?

Methought some traitor smote me on the head.

What said you, my good lord, that our brave English

Had sallied out from Calais and driven back

The Frenchmen from their trenches?

*Heath.* Alas! no.

That gateway to the mainland over which

Our flag hath floated for two hundred years

Is France again.

*Mary.* So; but it is not lost — Not yet. Send out; let England as of old

Rise lionlike, strike hard and deep into The prey they are rending from her — ay, and rend

The renders too. Send out, send out, and make

Musters in all the counties; gather all From sixteen years to sixty; collect the fleet;

Let every craft that carries sail and gun

Steer toward Calais. Guisnes is not taken yet?

*Heath.* Guisnes is not taken yet.

*Mary.* There yet is hope.

*Heath.* Ah, madam, but your people are so cold; <sup>160</sup>

I do much fear that England will not care.

Methinks there is no manhood left among us.

*Mary.* Send out; I am too weak to stir abroad.

Tell my mind to the Council — to the Parliament;

Proclaim it to the winds. Thou art cold thyself

To babble of their coldness. O, would I were

My father for an hour! Away now — quick! <sup>[Exit Heath.]</sup>

I hoped I had served God with all my might!

It seems I have not. Ah! much heresy Shelter'd in Calais. Saints, I have rebuilt <sup>170</sup>

Your shrines, set up your broken images;

Be comfortable to me. Suffer not That my brief reign in England be defamed

Thro' all her angry chronicles hereafter By loss of Calais. Grant me Calais.

Philip,

We have made war upon the Holy Father

All for your sake. What good could come of that?

*Lady Clarence.* No, Madam, not against the Holy Father;

You did but help King Philip's war with France,

Your troops were never down in Italy.

*Mary.* I am a byword. Heretic and rebel <sup>181</sup>

Point at me and make merry. Philip gone!

And Calais gone! Time that I were gone too!

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, if the fetid gutter had a voice

And cried I was not clean, what should I care?

Or you, for heretic cries? And I believe,

Spite of your melancholy Sir Nicholas, Your England is as loyal as myself.

*Mary (seeing the paper dropt by Pole).* There! there! another paper!

Said you not <sup>189</sup>

Many of these were loyal? Shall I try If this be one of such?

*Lady Clarence.* Let it be, let it be. God pardon me! I have never yet found one. <sup>[Aside.]</sup>

*Mary (reads).* 'Your people hate you as your husband hates you.'

Clarence, Clarence, what have I done? what sin

Beyond all grace, all pardon? Mother of God,

Thou knowest never woman meant so well,

And fared so ill in this disastrous world.

My people hate me and desire my death.

*Lady Clarence.* No, madam, no.

*Mary.* My husband hates me, and desires my death. <sup>200</sup>

*Lady Clarence.* No, madam; these are libels.

*Mary.* I hate myself, and I desire my death.

*Lady Clarence.* Long live your Majesty! Shall Alice sing you One of her pleasant songs? Alice, my child,

Bring us your lute (*Alice goes*). They say the gloom of Saul

Was lighten'd by young David's harp.

*Mary.* Too young! And never knew a Philip.

*Re-enter ALICE.*

Give me the lute.

He hates me!

(*She sings.*)

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!

Beauty passes like a breath, and love is lost in loathing. <sup>210</sup>

Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but say the world is nothing—

Low, lute, low!

Love will hover round the flowers when they first awaken;

Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be overtaken.

Low, my lute! O, low, my lute! we fade and are forsaken—

Low, dear lute, low!

Take it away! not low enough for me!

*Alice.* Your Grace hath a low voice.

*Mary.* How dare you say it? Even for that he hates me. A low voice

Lost in a wilderness where none can hear! <sup>220</sup>

A voice of shipwreck on a shoreless sea!

A low voice from the dust and from the grave!

(*Sitting on the ground.*) There, am I low enough now?

*Alice.* Good Lord! how grim and ghastly looks her Grace,

With both her knees drawn upward to her chin.

There was an old-world tomb beside my father's,

And this was open'd, and the dead were found

Sitting, and in this fashion; she looks a corpse.

*Enter LADY MAGDALEN DACRES.*

*Lady Magdalen.* Madam, the Count de Feria waits without, In hopes to see your Highness.

*Lady Clarence (pointing to Mary).*

Wait he must — <sup>230</sup>

Her trance again. She neither sees nor hears,

And may not speak for hours.

*Lady Magdalen.* Unhappiest Of queens and wives and women!

*Alice (in the foreground with Lady Magdalen).* And all along

Of Philip.

*Lady Magdalen.* Not so loud! Our Clarence there

Sees ever such an aureole round the Queen,

It gilds the greatest wronger of her peace,

Who stands the nearest to her.

*Alice.* Ay, this Philip; I used to love the Queen with all my heart—

God help me, but methinks I love her less

For such a dotage upon such a man. <sup>240</sup>

I would I were as tall and strong as you.

*Lady Magdalen.* I seem half-shamed at times to be so tall.

*Alice.* You are the stateliest deer in all the herd—

Beyond his aim—but I am small and scandalous,

And love to hear bad tales of Philip.

*Lady Magdalen.* Why? I never heard him utter worse of you

Than that you were low-statured.

*Alice.* Does he think Low stature is low nature, or all women's

Low as his own?

*Lady Magdalen.* There you strike in the nail.

This coarseness is a want of phantasy. It is the low man thinks the woman

low; <sup>251</sup>

Sin is too dull to see beyond himself.

*Alice.* Ah, Magdalen, sin is bold as well as dull.

How dared he?

*Lady Magdalen.* Stupid soldiers oft are bold.

Poor lads, they see not what the general sees,

A risk of utter ruin. I am *not*

Beyond his aim, or was not.

*Alice.* Who? Not you? Tell, tell me; save my credit with myself.

*Lady Magdalen.* I never breathed it to a bird in the caves,

Would not for all the stars and maiden moon <sup>260</sup>

Our drooping Queen should know! In Hampton Court

My window look'd upon the corridor;

And I was robing; this poor throat of mine

Barer than I should wish a man to see it —

When he we speak of drove the window back,

And, like a thief, push'd in his royal hand;

But by God's providence a good stout staff

Lay near me, and you know me strong of arm.

I do believe I lamed his Majesty's For a day or two, tho', give the devil

his due, <sup>270</sup> I never found he bore me any spite.

*Alice.* I would she could have wedded that poor youth,

My Lord of Devon, — light enough, God knows,

And mixt with Wyatt's rising, — and the boy

Not out of him — but neither cold, coarse, cruel,

And more than all — no Spaniard. *Lady Clarence.* Not so loud.

Lord Devon, girls! what are you whispering here?

*Alice.* Probing an old state-secret — how it chanced

That this young earl was sent on foreign travel,

Not lost his head. *Lady Clarence.* There was no proof

against him. <sup>280</sup> *Alice.* Nay, madam; did not Gardiner intercept

A letter which the Count de Noailles wrote

To that dead traitor Wyatt, with full proof

Of Courtenay's treason? What became of that?

*Lady Clarence.* Some say that Gardiner, out of love for him,

Burnt it, and some relate that it was lost

When Wyatt sack'd the Chancellor's house in Southwark.

Let dead things rest.

*Alice.* Ay, and with him who died Alone in Italy.

*Lady Clarence.* Much changed, I hear,

Had put off levity and put graveness on. <sup>290</sup>

The foreign courts report him in his manner

Noble as his young person and an old shield.

It might be so — but all is over now; He caught a chill in the lagoons of

Venice, And died in Padua.

*Mary (looking up suddenly).* Died in the true faith?

*Lady Clarence.* Ay, madam, happily. *Mary.* Happier he than I.

*Lady Magdalen.* It seems her Highness hath awaken'd. Think you

That I might dare to tell her that the count —

*Mary.* I will see no man hence for evermore,

Saving my confessor and my cousin Pole. <sup>300</sup>

*Lady Magdalen.* It is the Count de Feria, my dear lady.

*Mary.* What count?

*Lady Magdalen.* The Count de Feria, from his Majesty

King Philip.

*Mary.* Philip! quick! loop up my hair!

Throw cushions on that seat, and make it thronelike.

Arrange my dress — the gorgeous Indian shawl

That Philip brought me in our happy days! —

That covers all. So — am I somewhat queenlike,

Bride of the mightiest sovereign upon earth?

*Lady Clarence.* Ay, so your Grace would bide a moment yet. <sup>310</sup>  
*Mary.* No, no, he brings a letter. I may die  
 Before I read it. Let me see him at once.

*Enter* COUNT DE FERIA *(kneels).*

*Feria.* I trust your Grace is well,  
*(Aside.)* How her hand burns!  
*Mary.* I am not well, but it will better me,  
 Sir Count, to read the letter which you bring.

*Feria.* Madam, I bring no letter.

*Mary.* How! no letter?

*Feria.* His Highness is so vex'd with strange affairs—

*Mary.* That his own wife is no affair of his.

*Feria.* Nay, madam, nay! he sends his veriest love, <sup>319</sup>  
 And says he will come quickly.

*Mary.* Doth he, indeed?  
 You, sir, do you remember what you said

When last you came to England?

*Feria.* Madam, I brought My King's congratulations; it was hoped

Your Highness was once more in happy state

To give him an heir male.

*Mary.* Sir, you said more;  
 You said he would come quickly. I had horses

On all the road from Dover, day and night;

On all the road from Harwich, night and day;

But the child came not, and the husband came not;

And yet he will come quickly. — Thou hast learnt <sup>330</sup>

Thy lesson, and I mine. There is no need

For Philip so to shame himself again. Return,

And tell him that I know he comes no more.

Tell him at last I know his love is dead,

And that I am in state to bring forth death—

Thou art commission'd to Elizabeth,  
 And not to me!

*Feria.* Mere compliments and wishes.

But shall I take some message from your Grace?

*Mary.* Tell her to come and close my dying eyes, <sup>340</sup>  
 And wear my crown, and dance upon my grave.

*Feria.* Then I may say your Grace will see your sister?

Your Grace is too low-spirited. Air and sunshine.

I would we had you, madam, in our warm Spain.

You droop in your dim London.

*Mary.* Have him away!  
 I sicken of his readiness.

*Lady Clarence.* My Lord Count, Her Highness is too ill for colloquy.

*Feria (kneels and kisses her hand).*  
 I wish her Highness better.

*(Aside.)* How her hand burns!  
 [Exeunt.]

## SCENE III

## A HOUSE NEAR LONDON

ELIZABETH, STEWARD OF THE  
 HOUSEHOLD, ATTENDANTS.

*Elizabeth.* There's half an angel wrong'd in your account;  
 Methinks I am all angel, that I bear it  
 Without more ruffling. Cast it o'er again.

*Steward.* I were whole devil if I wrong'd you, madam.

[Exit Steward.]

*Attendant.* The Count de FERIA, from the King of Spain.

*Elizabeth.* Ah!—let him enter.  
 Nay, you need not go:

[To her Ladies]  
 Remain within the chamber, but apart.  
 We'll have no private conference.  
 Welcome to England!

*Enter* FERIA.

*Feria.* Fair island star!

*Elizabeth.* I shine! What else, Sir Count?

*Feria.* As far as France, and into Philip's heart. <sup>10</sup>  
 My King would know if you be fairly served,  
 And lodged, and treated.

*Elizabeth.* You see the lodging, sir. I am well-served, and am in everything Most loyal and most grateful to the Queen.

*Feria.* You should be grateful to my master, too.  
He spoke of this; and unto him you owe  
That Mary hath acknowledged you her heir.

*Elizabeth.* No, not to her nor him; but to the people,  
Who know my right, and love me, as I love  
The people! whom God aid!

*Feria.* You will be Queen,  
And, were I Philip—

*Elizabeth.* Wherefore pause you—  
what? <sup>21</sup>

*Feria.* Nay, but I speak from mine own self, not him.  
Your royal sister cannot last; your hand

Will be much coveted! What a delicate one!

Our Spanish ladies have none such—and there,

Were you in Spain, this fine fair gossamer gold—

Like sun-gilt breathings on a frosty dawn—

That hovers round your shoulder—

*Elizabeth.* Is it so fine?  
Troth, some have said so.

*Feria.* — would be deemed a miracle.

*Elizabeth.* Your Philip hath gold hair and golden beard; <sup>30</sup>  
There must be ladies many with hair like mine.

*Feria.* Some few of Gothic blood have golden hair,  
But none like yours.

*Elizabeth.* I am happy you approve it.

*Feria.* But as to Philip and your Grace,—consider,—  
If such a one as you should match with Spain,  
What hinders but that Spain and England join'd  
Should make the mightiest empire earth has known.

Spain would be England on her seas,  
and England

Mistress of the Indies.

*Elizabeth.* It may chance that England

Will be the Mistress of the Indies yet, <sup>40</sup>

Without the help of Spain.

*Feria.* Impossible;  
Except you put Spain down.

Wide of the mark even for a mad-man's dream.

*Elizabeth.* Perhaps; but we have seamen. Count de Feria,  
I take it that the King hath spoken to you;

But is Don Carlos such a goodly match?

*Feria.* Don Carlos, Madam, is but twelve years old.

*Elizabeth.* Ay, tell the King that I will muse upon it;

He is my good friend, and I would keep him so;

But—he would have me Catholic of Rome, <sup>50</sup>

And that I scarce can be; and, sir, till now

My sister's marriage, and my father's marriages,

Make me full fain to live and die a maid.

But I am much beholden to your King. Have you aught else to tell me?

*Feria.* Nothing, madam, Save that methought I gather'd from the Queen

That she would see your Grace before she—died.

*Elizabeth.* God's death! and wherefore spake you not before?

We dally with our lazy moments here, And hers are number'd. Horses there, without! <sup>60</sup>

I am much beholden to the King, your master.

Why did you keep me prating? Horses, there!

[Exit Elizabeth, etc.]

*Feria.* So from a clear sky falls the thunderbolt!

Don Carlos? Madam, if you marry Philip,

Then I and he will snaffle your 'God's death,'

And break your paces in, and make you tame.

God's death, forsooth—you do not know King Philip! [Exit.]



QUEEN ELIZABETH

## SCENE IV

LONDON. BEFORE THE PALACE

*A light burning within. Voices of the night passing.*

*First.* Is not yon light in the Queen's chamber?

*Second.* Ay,  
They say she's dying.

*First.* So is Cardinal Pole.  
May the great angels join their wings,  
and make  
Down for their heads to heaven!

*Second.* Amen. Come on.  
[*Exeunt.*

## TWO OTHERS.

*First.* There's the Queen's light. I hear she cannot live.

*Second.* God curse her and her league! Gardiner burns Already; but to pay them full in kind, The hottest hold in all the devil's den Were but a sort of winter. Sir, in Guernsey,

I watch'd a woman burn; and in her agony

The mother came upon her—a child was born—

And, sir, they hurl'd it back into the fire,

That, being but baptized in fire, the babe

Might be in fire for ever. Ah, good neighbor,  
There should be something fierier than fire

To yield them their deserts.

*First.*

Amen to all

Your wish, and further ! <sup>17</sup>

*A Third Voice.* Deserts ! Amen to what ? Whose deserts ? Yours ? You have a gold ring on your finger, and soft raiment about your body ; and is not the woman up yonder sleeping after all she has done, in peace and quietness, on a soft bed, in a closed room, with light, fire, physic, tendance ; and I have seen the true men of Christ lying famine-dead by scores, and under no ceiling but the cloud that wept on them, not for them. <sup>30</sup>

*First.* Friend, tho' so late, it is not safe to preach.

You had best go home. What are you ?

*Third.* What am I ? One who cries continually with sweat and tears to the Lord God that it would please Him out of His infinite love to break down all kingship and queenship, all priesthood and prelacy ; to cancel and abolish all bonds of human allegiance, all the magistracy, all the nobles, and all the wealthy ; and to send us again, according to His promise, the one King, the Christ, and all things in common, as in the day of the first church, when Christ Jesus was King. <sup>46</sup>

*First.* If ever I heard a madman, — let's away !

Why, you long-winded — Sir, you go beyond me.

I pride myself on being moderate.

Good night ! Go home ! Besides, you curse so loud,

The watch will hear you, Get you home at once. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE V

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

*A Gallery on one side. The moonlight streaming through a range of windows on the wall opposite. MARY, LADY*

CLARENCE, LADY MAGDALEN DACHES, ALICE. *QUEEN pacing the Gallery. A writing-table in front. QUEEN comes to the table and writes and goes again, pacing the Gallery.*

*Lady Clarence.* Mine eyes are dim : what hath she written ? read.

*Alice.* 'I am dying, Philip ; come to me.'

*Lady Magdalen.* There — up and down, poor lady, up and down.

*Alice.* And how her shadow crosses one by one

The moonlight casements pattern'd on the wall,

Following her like her sorrow ! She turns again.

[*Queen sits and writes, and goes again.*]

*Lady Clarence.* What hath she written now ?

*Alice.* Nothing ; but 'come, come, come,' and all awry,

And blotted by her tears. This cannot last. [*Queen returns.*]

*Mary.* I whistle to the bird has broken cage, <sup>10</sup>

And all in vain. [*Sitting down.*]  
Calais gone — Guisnes gone, too — and Philip gone !

*Lady Clarence.* Dear madam, Philip is but at the wars ;

I cannot doubt but that he comes again ;

And he is with you in a measure still.

I never look'd upon so fair a likeness

As your great King in armor there, his hand

Upon his helmet. [*Pointing to the portrait of Philip on the wall.*]

*Mary.* Doth he not look noble ? I had heard of him in battle over seas,

And I would have my warrior all in arms. <sup>20</sup>

He said it was not courtly to stand helmeted

Before the Queen. He had his gracious moment,

Altho' you'll not believe me. How he smiles

As if he loved me yet !

*Lady Clarence.* And so he does.

*Mary.* He never loved me — nay, he could not love me.

It was his father's policy against France.

I am eleven years older than he,

Poor boy ! [ *Weeps.*

*Alice.* That was a lusty boy of twenty-seven ; [ *Aside.*

Poor enough in God's grace !

*Mary.* And all in vain !

The Queen of Scots is married to the Dauphin,

And Charles, the lord of this low world, is gone ;

And all his wars and wisdoms past away ;

And in a moment I shall follow him.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, dearest lady, see your good physician.

*Mary.* Drugs — but he knows they cannot help me — says

That rest is all — tells me I must not think —

That I must rest — I shall rest by and by.

Catch the wild cat, cage him, and when he springs

And maims himself against the bars, say 'rest.'

Why, you must kill him if you would have him rest —

Dead or alive, you cannot make him happy.

*Lady Clarence.* Your Majesty has lived so pure a life,

And done such mighty things by Holy Church,

I trust that God will make you happy yet.

*Mary.* What is the strange thing happiness ? Sit down here.

Tell me thine happiest hour.

*Lady Clarence.* I will, if that May make your Grace forget yourself a little.

There runs a shallow brook across our field

For twenty miles, where the black crow flies five,

And doth so bound and babble all the way

As if itself were happy. It was May-time,

And I was walking with the man I loved.

I loved him, but I thought I was not loved.

And both were silent, letting the wild brook

Speak for us — till he stoop'd and gather'd one

From out a bed of thick forget-me-nots,

Look'd hard and sweet at me, and gave it me.

I took it, tho' I did not know I took it,

And put it in my bosom, and all at once

I felt his arms about me, and his lips —

*Mary.* O God ! I have been too slack, too slack ;

There are Hot Gospellers even among our guards —

Nobles we dared not touch. We have but burnt

The heretic priest, workmen, and women and children.

Wet, famine, ague, fever, storm, wreck, wrath, —

We have so play'd the coward ; but by God's grace,

We'll follow Philip's leading, and set up

The Holy Office here — garner the wheat,

And burn the tares with unquenchable fire !

Burn ! —

Fie, what a savor ! tell the cooks to close

The doors of all the offices below.

Latimer !

Sir, we are private with our women here —

Ever a rough, blunt, and uncourtly fellow —

Thou light a torch that never will go out !

'Tis out — mine flames. Women, the Holy Father

Has ta'en the legateship from our cousin Pole —

Was that well done ? and poor Pole pines of it,

As I do, to the death. I am but a woman,

I have no power. — Ah, weak and meek old man,

Sevenfold dishonor'd even in the sight Of thine own sectaries — No, no. No

pardon ! —



Why, that was false; there is the right hand still

Beckons me hence.

Sir, you were burnt for heresy, not for treason,

Remember that! 't was I and Bonner did it,

And Pole; we are three to one — Have you found mercy there,

Grant it me here — and see, he smiles and goes, 90

Gentle as in life.

*Alice.* Madam, who goes? King Philip?

*Mary.* No, Philip comes and goes, but never goes.

Women, when I am dead,  
Open my heart, and there you will find written

Two names, Philip and Calais; open his, —

So that he have one, —

You will find Philip only, policy, policy, —

Ay, worse than that — not one hour true to me!

Foul maggots crawling in a fester'd vice!

Adulterous to the very heart of hell! 100

Hast thou a knife?

*Alice.* Ay, madam, but o' God's mercy —

*Mary.* Fool, think'st thou I would peril mine own soul

By slaughter of the body? I could not, girl,

Not this way — callous with a constant stripe,

Unwoundable. The knife!

*Alice.* Take heed, take heed! The blade is keen as death.

*Mary.* This Philip shall not Stare in upon me in my haggardness;

Old, miserable, diseased,  
Incapable of children. Come thou down.

[*Cuts out the picture and throws it down.*]

Lie there. [*Wails.*] O God, I have kill'd my Philip!

*Alice.* No, 110  
Madam, you have but cut the canvas out;

We can replace it.

*Mary.* All is well then; rest — I will to rest; he said I must have rest.

[*Cries of 'Elizabeth' in the street.*  
A cry! What's that? Elizabeth? revolt?

A new Northumberland, another Wyatt?

I'll fight it on the threshold of the grave.

*Lady Clarence.* Madam, your royal sister comes to see you.

*Mary.* I will not see her.

Who knows if Boleyn's daughter be my sister?

I will see none except the priest. Your arm. [*To Lady Clarence.*

O Saint of Aragon, with that sweet worn smile 121

Among thy patient wrinkles — help me hence. [*Exeunt.*

*The Priest passes. Enter ELIZABETH and SIR WILLIAM CECIL.*

*Elizabeth.* Good counsel yours. — No one in waiting? still,

As if the chamberlain were Death himself!

The room she sleeps in — is not this the way?

No, that way there are voices. Am I too late?

Cecil . . . God guide me lest I lose the way! [*Exit Elizabeth.*

*Cecil.* Many points weather'd, many perilous ones,

At last a harbor opens; but therein Sunk rocks — they need fine steering — much it is 130

To be nor mad nor bigot — have a mind —

Nor let priests' talk, or dream of worlds to be,

Miscolor things about her — sudden touches

For him, or him — sunk rocks; no passionate faith —

But — if let be — balance and compromise;

Brave, wary, sane to the heart of her — a Tudor

School'd by the shadow of death — a Boleyn, too,

Glancing across the Tudor — not so well.

*Enter ALICE.*

How is the good Queen now?

*Alice.* Away from Philip.

Back in her childhood — prattling to  
 her mother <sup>140</sup>  
 Of her betrothal to the Emperor  
 Charles,  
 And childlike-jealous of him again —  
 and once  
 She thank'd her father sweetly for his  
 book  
 Against that godless German. Ah,  
 those days  
 Were happy. It was never merry  
 world  
 In England since the Bible came  
 among us.

*Cecil.* And who says that?

*Alice.* It is a saying among the  
 Catholics.

*Cecil.* It never will be merry world  
 in England

Till all men have their Bible, rich and  
 poor. <sup>150</sup>

*Alice.* The Queen is dying, or you  
 dare not say it.

*Enter ELIZABETH.*

*Elizabeth.* The Queen is dead.

*Cecil.* Then here she stands! my  
 homage.

*Elizabeth.* She knew me, and ac-  
 knowledged me her heir,

Pray'd me to pay her debts, and keep  
 the Faith;

Then claspt the cross, and pass'd away  
 in peace.

I left her lying still and beautiful,  
 More beautiful than in life. Why  
 would you vex yourself,

Poor sister? Sir, I swear I have no  
 heart



SIR WILLIAM CECIL

To be your Queen. To reign is rest-  
less fence,  
Tierce, quart, and trickery. Peace is  
with the dead. 160

Her life was winter, for her spring  
was nipt;

And she loved much: pray God she  
be forgiven!

*Cecil.* Peace with the dead, who  
never were at peace!

Yet she loved one so much — I needs  
must say —

That never English monarch dying  
left

England so little.

*Elizabeth.* But with Cecil's aid  
And others, if our person be secured  
From traitor stabs — we will make  
England great.

*Enter PAGET, and other LORDS OF  
THE COUNCIL, SIR RALPH BAGEN-  
HALL, etc.*

*Lords.* God save Elizabeth, the  
Queen of England!

*Bagenhall.* God save the Crown!  
the Papacy is no more. 170

*Paget (aside).* Are we so sure of  
that?

*Acclamation.* God save the Queen!



LORD LYTTON

## HAROLD

### A DRAMA

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON,

*Viceroy and Governor-General of India.*

MY DEAR LORD LYTTON, — After old-world records — such as the Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou, — Edward Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest, and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his 'Harold' to my father's brother; allow me to dedicate my 'Harold' to yourself.

A. TENNYSON.

---

SHOW-DAY AT BATTLE ABBEY, 1876

A GARDEN here — May breath and bloom of spring —  
The cuckoo yonder from an English elm  
Crying, 'With my false egg I overwhelm  
The native nest;' and fancy hears the ring

Of harness, and that deathful arrow sing,  
 And Saxon battle-axe clang on Norman helm.  
 Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm ;  
 Here fought, here fell, our Norman-slander'd king.  
 O Garden blossoming out of English blood !  
 O strange hate-healer Time ! We stroll and stare  
 Where might made right eight hundred years ago ;  
 Might, right ? ay, good, so all things make for good —  
 But he and he, if soul be soul, are where  
 Each stands full face with all he did below.

# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.  
 STIGAND, *created Archbishop of Canterbury by the Antipope Benedict.*  
 ALDRED, *Archbishop of York.*  
 THE NORMAN BISHOP OF LONDON.  
 HAROLD, *Earl of Wessex, afterwards King of England*  
 TOSTIG, *Earl of Northumbria*  
 GURTH, *Earl of East Anglia*  
 LEOFWIN, *Earl of Kent and Essex*  
 WULFNOTH  
 COUNT WILLIAM OF NORMANDY.  
 WILLIAM RUFUS.  
 WILLIAM MALET, *a Norman Noble.*<sup>1</sup>  
 EDWIN, *Earl of Mercia*  
 MORCAR, *Earl of Northumbria after Tostig*  
 GAMEL, *a Northumbrian Thane.*  
 GUY, *Count of Ponthieu.*  
 ROLF, *a Ponthieu Fisherman.*  
 HUGH MARGOT, *a Norman Monk.*  
 OSGOD and ATHELRIC, *Canons from Waltham.*  
 THE QUEEN, *Edward the Confessor's Wife, Daughter of Godwin.*  
 ALDWYTH, *Daughter of Alfgar and widow of Griffyth, King of Wales.*  
 EDITH, *Ward of King Edward.*

*Sons of Godwin.*

*Sons of Alfgar of Mercia.*

Courtiers, Earls and Thanes, Men-at-Arms, Canons of Waltham, Fishermen, etc.

## HAROLD

### ACT I

#### SCENE I. — LONDON. THE KING'S PALACE

*(A comet seen through the open window.)*

ALDWYTH, GAMEL, COURTIERS *talking together.*

*First Courtier.* Lo ! there once more  
 — this is the seventh night !  
 Yon grimly-glaring, treble-brandish'd  
 scourge  
 Of England !

*Second Courtier.* Horrible !

*First Courtier.* Look you, there's a  
 star

That dances in it as mad with agony !  
*Third Courtier.* Ay, like a spirit in  
 hell who skips and flies

To right and left, and cannot scape the  
 flame.

*Second Courtier.* Steam'd upward  
 from the undescendible

Abysm.

*First Courtier.* Or floated downward  
 from the throne

Of God Almighty.

*Aldwyth.* Gamel, son of Orm,  
 What thinkest thou this means ?

*Gamel.* War, my dear lady !

*Aldwyth.* Doth this affright thee ?

*Gamel.* Mightily, my dear lady !

<sup>1</sup> . . . quidam partim Normannus et Anglus  
 Computer Herald. (*Guy of Amiens*, 587.)

*Aldwyth.* Stand by me then, and  
look upon my face, <sup>12</sup>  
Not on the comet.

*Enter MORCAR.*

Brother! why so pale?

*Morcar.* It glares in heaven, it flares  
upon the Thames,  
The people are as thick as bees below,  
They hum like bees, — they cannot  
speak — for awe;  
Look to the skies, then to the river,  
strike  
Their hearts, and hold their babies up  
to it.

I think that they would Molochize  
them too,

To have the heavens clear.

*Aldwyth.* They fright not me.

*Enter LEOFWIN, after him GURTH.*  
Ask thou Lord Leofwin what he thinks  
of this! <sup>21</sup>

*Morcar.* Lord Leofwin, dost thou  
believe that these  
Three rods of blood-red fire up yonder  
mean  
The doom of England and the wrath  
of Heaven?

*Bishop of London (passing).* Did ye  
not cast with bestial violence  
Our holy Norman bishops down from  
all  
Their thrones in England? I alone re-  
main.

Why should not Heaven be wroth?

*Leofwin.* With us, or thee?

*Bishop of London.* Did ye not outlaw  
your archbishop Robert,  
Robert of Jumièges — well-nigh mur-  
der him too? <sup>30</sup>

Is there no reason for the wrath of  
Heaven?

*Leofwin.* Why, then the wrath of  
Heaven hath three tails,  
The devil only one.

[*Exit Bishop of London.*

*Enter ARCHBISHOP STIGAND.*

Ask our archbishop.  
Stigand should know the purposes of  
Heaven.

*Stigand.* Not I. I cannot read the  
face of heaven;  
Perhaps our vines will grow the better  
for it.

*Leofwin (laughing).* He can but read  
the King's face on his coins.

*Stigand.* Ay, ay, young lord, *there*  
the King's face is power.

*Gurth.* O father, mock not at a pub-  
lic fear,

But tell us, is this pendent hell in hea-  
ven <sup>40</sup>

A harm to England?

*Stigand.* Ask it of King Edward!  
And he may tell thee I am a harm to  
England.

Old uncanonical Stigand — ask of *me*  
Who had my pallium from an Anti-  
pope!

Not he the man — for in our windy  
world

What's up is faith, what's down is  
heresy.

Our friends, the Normans, help to  
shake his chair.

I have a Norman fever on me, son,  
And cannot answer sanely. — What it  
means?

Ask our broad earl.

[*Pointing to Harold, who enters.*

*Harold (seeing Gamel).* Hail, Gamel,  
son of Orm! <sup>50</sup>

Albeit no rolling stone, my good friend  
Gamel,

Thou hast rounded since we met. Thy  
life at home

Is easier than mine here. Look! am I  
not

Work-wan, flesh-fallen?

*Gamel.* Art thou sick, good earl?

*Harold.* Sick as an autumn swallow  
for a voyage,

Sick for an idle week of hawk and  
hound

Beyond the seas — a change! When  
camest thou hither?

*Gamel.* To-day, good earl.

*Harold.* Is the North quiet, Gamel?

*Gamel.* Nay, there be murmurs, for  
thy brother breaks us

With over-taxing — quiet, ay, as yet —  
Nothing as yet.

*Harold.* Stand by him, mine old  
friend, <sup>61</sup>

Thou art a great voice in Northumber-  
land!

Advise him; speak him sweetly, he  
will hear thee.

He is passionate, but honest. Stand  
thou by him!

More talk of this to-morrow, if yon  
weird sign

Not blast us in our dreams. — Well,  
father Stigand —

[*To Stigand, who advances to him.*  
*Stigand (pointing to the comet).* War  
there, my son ? is that the doom  
of England ?

*Harold.* Why not the doom of all the  
world as well ?

For all the world sees it as well as  
England.

These meteors came and went before  
our day,

Not harming any ; it threatens us no  
more

Than French or Norman. War ? the  
worst that follows

Things that seem jerk'd out of the  
common rut

Of Nature is the hot religious fool,

Who, seeing war in heaven, for hea-  
ven's credit

Makes it on earth — but look, where  
Edward draws

A faint foot hither, leaning upon Tos-  
tig.

He hath learnt to love our Tostig  
much of late.

*Leofwin.* And he hath learnt, despite  
the tiger in him,

To sleek and supple himself to the  
King's hand.

*Gurth.* I trust the kingly touch that  
cures the evil

May serve to charm the tiger out of  
him.

*Leofwin.* He hath as much of cat as  
tiger in him.

Our Tostig loves the hand and not the  
man.

*Harold.* Nay ! Better die than lie !

*Enter KING, QUEEN, and TOSTIG.*

*Edward.* In heaven signs !  
Signs upon earth ! signs everywhere !  
your priests

Gross, worldly, simoniacal, unlearn'd !  
They scarce can read their Psalter ;

and your churches

Uncouth, unhandsome, while in Nor-  
manland

God speaks thro' abler voices, as He  
dwells

In statelier shrines. I say not this, as  
being

Half Norman-blooded, nor, as some  
have held,

Because I love the Norman better —  
no,

But dreading God's revenge upon this  
realm

For narrowness and coldness ; and I  
say it

For the last time perchance, before I go  
To find the sweet refreshment of the  
Saints.

I have lived a life of utter purity ;

I have builded the great church of  
Holy Peter ;

I have wrought miracles — to God the  
glory ! —

And miracles will in my name be  
wrought

Hereafter. — I have fought the fight  
and go —

I see the flashing of the gates of  
pearl —

And it is well with me, tho' some of  
you

Have scorn'd me — ay — but after I  
am gone

Woe, woe to England ! I have had a  
vision ;

The Seven Sleepers in the cave at  
Ephesus

Have turn'd from right to left.

*Harold.* My most dear master,  
What matters ? let them turn from  
left to right

And sleep again.

*Tostig.* Too hardy with thy King !  
A life of prayer and fasting well may  
see

Deeper into the mysteries of heaven  
Than thou, good brother.

*Alvryth (aside).* Sees he into thine,  
That thou wouldst have his promise  
for the crown ?

*Edward.* Tostig says true ; my son,  
thou art too hard,

Not stagger'd by this ominous earth  
and heaven ;

But heaven and earth are threads of  
the same loom,

Play into one another, and weave the  
web

That may confound thee yet.

*Harold.* Nay, I trust not,  
For I have served thee long and hon-  
estly.

*Edward.* I know it, son ; I am not  
thankless ; thou

Hast broken all my foes, lighten'd for  
me

The weight of this poor crown, and  
left me time

And peace for prayer to gain a better  
one.

Twelve years of service! England  
loves thee for it.

Thou art the man to rule her!

*Aldwyth (aside).* So, not Tostig!

*Harold.* And after those twelve  
years a boon, my King.

Respite, a holiday, — thyself wast  
wont

To love the chase, — thy leave to set  
my feet

On board, and hunt and hawk beyond  
the seas! <sup>130</sup>

*Edward.* What, with this flaming  
horror overhead?

*Harold.* Well, when it passes then.

*Edward.* Ay, if it pass.

Go not to Normandy — go not to Nor-  
mandy.

*Harold.* And wherefore not, my  
King, to Normandy?

Is not my brother Wulfnoth hostage  
there

For my dear father's loyalty to thee?  
I pray thee, let me hence and bring  
him home.

*Edward.* Not thee, my son; some  
other messenger.

*Harold.* And why not me, my lord,  
to Normandy?

Is not the Norman Count thy friend  
and mine? <sup>140</sup>

*Edward.* I pray thee, do not go to  
Normandy.

*Harold.* Because my father drove  
the Normans out

Of England? — That was many a  
summer gone —

Forgotten and forgiven by them and  
thee.

*Edward.* Harold, I will not yield  
thee leave to go.

*Harold.* Why, then to Flanders. I  
will hawk and hunt

In Flanders.

*Edward.* Be there not fair woods  
and fields

In England? Wilful, wilful! Go —  
the Saints

Pilot and prosper all thy wandering  
out

And homeward! — Tostig, I am faint  
again. — <sup>150</sup>

Son Harold, I will in and pray for  
thee.

*[Exit, leaning on Tostig, and  
followed by Stigand, Morcar, and  
Courtiers.]*

*Harold.* What lies upon the mind  
of our good King,

That he should harp this way on Nor-  
mandy?

*Queen.* Brother, the King is wiser  
than he seems;

And Tostig knows it; Tostig loves  
the King.

*Harold.* And love should know;  
and — be the King so wise, —

Then Tostig too were wiser than he  
seems.

I love the man, but not his phantasies.  
*Re-enter TOSTIG*

Well, brother,

When didst thou hear from thy North-  
umbria?

*Tostig.* When did I hear aught but  
this 'When' from thee? <sup>160</sup>

Leave me alone, brother, with my  
Northumbria;

She is my mistress, let me look to her!  
The King hath made me earl; make  
me not fool!

Nor make the King a fool, who made  
me earl!

*Harold.* No, Tostig — lest I make  
myself a fool

Who made the King who made thee  
make thee earl.

*Tostig.* Why chafe me then? Thou  
knowest I soon go wild.

*Gurth.* Come, come! as yet thou  
art not gone so wild

But thou canst hear the best and wisest  
of us.

*Harold.* So says old Gurth, not I;  
yet hear! thine earldom, <sup>170</sup>

Tostig, hath been a kingdom. Their  
old crown

Is yet a force among them, a sun set.  
But leaving light enough for Alfgar's  
house

To strike thee down by — nay, this  
ghastly glare

May heat their fancies.

*Tostig.* My most worthy brother,  
Thou art the quietest man in all the  
world —



Ay, ay, and wise in peace and great in war—

Pray God the people choose thee for their king!

But all the powers of the house of Godwin

Are not enfram'd in thee.

*Harold.* Thank the Saints, no! 180  
But thou hast drain'd them shallow  
by thy tolls,

And thou art ever here about the King.

Thine absence well may seem a want of care.

Cling to their love; for, now the sons of Godwin

Sit topmost in the field of England, envy,

Like the rough bear beneath the tree, good brother,

Waits till the man let go.

*Tostig.* Good counsel truly! 190  
I heard from my Northumbria yesterday.

*Harold.* How goes it then with thy Northumbria? Well?

*Tostig.* And wouldst thou that it went aught else than well? 190

*Harold.* I would it went as well as with mine earldom,

Leofwin's and Gurth's.

*Tostig.* Ye govern milder men.

*Gurth.* We have made them milder by just government.

*Tostig.* Ay, ever give yourselves your own good word.

*Leofwin.* An honest gift, by all the Saints, if giver

And taker be but honest! but they bribe

Each other, and so often, an honest world

Will not believe them.

*Harold.* I may tell thee, *Tostig*, I heard from thy Northumberland today.

*Tostig.* From spies of thine to spy my nakedness 200

In my poor North.

*Harold.* There is a movement there, A blind one—nothing yet.

*Tostig.* Crush it at once  
With all the power I have!—I must—  
I will!—

Crush it half-born! Full still? or wisdom there,

My wise head-shaking Harold?

*Harold.* Make not thou  
The nothing something. Wisdom  
when in power

And wisest should not frown as Power,  
but smile

As kindness, watching all, till the true  
must

Shall make her strike as Power: but  
when to strike—

O *Tostig*, O dear brother—if they  
prance, 210

Rein in, not lash them, lest they rear  
and run

And break both neck and axle.

*Tostig.* Good again!  
Good counsel tho' scarce needed.

Pour not water  
In the full vessel running out at top  
To swamp the house.

*Leofwin.* Nor thou be a wild thing  
Out of the waste, to turn and bite the  
hand

Would help thee from the trap.

*Tostig.* Thou playest in tune.  
*Leofwin.* To the deaf adder thee,  
that wilt not dance

However wisely charm'd.

*Tostig.* No more, no more!  
*Gurth.* I likewise cry 'no more.'

Unwholesome talk 220  
For Godwin's house! *Leofwin*, thou  
hast a tongue!

*Tostig*, thou look'st as thou wouldst  
spring upon him.

Saint Olaf, not while I am by! Come,  
come,

Join hands, let brethren dwell in unity;  
Let kith and kin stand close as our  
shield-wall,

Who breaks us then? I say, thou  
hast a tongue,

And *Tostig* is not stout enough to bear  
it.

Vex him not, *Leofwin*.

*Tostig.* No, I am not vext, —  
Altho' ye seek to vex me, one and all.  
I have to make report of my good  
earldom 230

To the good King who gave it—not  
to you—

Not any of you. — I am not vext at all.

*Harold.* The King? the King is  
ever at his prayers;

In all that handles matter of the state  
I am the King.

*Tostig.* That shalt thou never be  
If I can thwart thee.

*Harold.* Brother, brother !

*Tostig.* Away !

[*Exit Tostig.*]

*Queen.* Spite of this grisly star ye  
three must gall

Poor *Tostig.*

*Leofwin.* *Tostig*, sister, galls him-  
self ;

He cannot smell a rose but pricks his  
nose

Against the thorn, and rails against  
the rose.

*Queen.* I am the only rose of all  
the stock <sup>240</sup>

That never thorn'd him ; *Edward*  
loves him, so

Ye hate him. *Harold* always hated  
him.

Why — how they fought when boys  
— and, *Holy Mary* !

How *Harold* used to beat him !

*Harold.* Why, boys will fight.  
*Leofwin* would often fight me, and I  
beat him.

Even old *Gurth* would fight. I had  
much ado

To hold mine own against old *Gurth*.  
Old *Gurth*,

We fought like great States for grave  
cause ; but *Tostig* —

On a sudden — at a something — for a  
nothing — <sup>250</sup>

The boy would fust me hard, and  
when we fought

I conquer'd, and he loved me none  
the less,

Till thou wouldst get him all apart,  
and tell him

That where he was but worsted he  
was wrong'd.

Ah ! thou hast taught the King to  
spoil him too ;

Now the spoilt child sways both.  
Take heed, take heed ;

Thou art the *Queen* ; ye are boy and  
girl no more.

Side not with *Tostig* in any violence,  
Lest thou be sideways guilty of the  
violence.

*Queen.* Come, fall not foul on me.  
I leave thee, brother. <sup>260</sup>

*Harold.* Nay, my good sister —  
[*Exit* *Queen*, *Harold*, *Gurth*,  
and *Leofwin*.]

*Aldwyth.* *Gamel*, son of *Orm*,  
What thinkest thou this means ?

[*Pointing to the comet.*]

*Gamel.* War, my dear lady,  
War, waste, plague, famine, all ma-  
lignities.

*Aldwyth.* It means the fall of *Tos-  
tig* from his earldom.

*Gamel.* That were too small a mat-  
ter for a comet !

*Aldwyth.* It means the lifting of  
the house of *Alfgar*.

*Gamel.* Too small ! a comet would  
not show for that !

*Aldwyth.* Not small for thee, if  
thou canst compass it.

*Gamel.* Thy love ?

*Aldwyth.* As much as I can give  
thee, man ; <sup>269</sup>

This *Tostig* is, or like to be, a tyrant.  
Stir up thy people ; oust him !

*Gamel.* And thy love ?

*Aldwyth.* As much as thou canst  
bear.

*Gamel.* I can bear all,  
And not be giddy.

*Aldwyth.* No more now ; to-mor-  
row.

## SCENE II

IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S  
HOUSE NEAR LONDON. SUNSET

*Edith.* Mad for thy mate, passion-  
ate nightingale ! —

I love thee for it — ay, but stay a  
moment ;

He can but stay a moment ; he is go-  
ing.

I fain would hear him coming ! — near  
me — near,

Somewhere — to draw him nearer with  
a charm

Like thine to thine !

(*Singing.*)

Love is come with a song and a smile,

Welcome Love with a smile and a song.

Love can stay but a little while.

Why cannot he stay ? They call him away.

Ye do him wrong, ye do him wrong ; <sup>11</sup>  
Love will stay for a whole life long.

*Enter* *HAROLD*.

*Harold.* The nightingales in Ha-  
vering-atte-Bower

Sang out their loves so loud that Edward's prayers  
Were deafen'd and he pray'd them dumb, and thus

I dumb thee too, my wingless nightingale ! *[Kissing her.]*

*Edith.* Thou art my music ! Would their wings were mine  
To follow thee to Flanders ! Must thou go ?

*Harold.* Not must, but will. It is but for one moon.

*Edith.* Leaving so many foes in Edward's hall <sup>20</sup>  
To league against thy weal. The Lady Aldwyth

Was here to-day, and when she touch'd on thee  
She stammer'd in her hate ; I am sure she hates thee,  
Pants for thy blood.

*Harold.* Well, I have given her cause —  
I fear no woman.

*Edith.* Hate not one who felt Some pity for thy hater ! I am sure

Her morning wanted sunlight, she so praised

The convent and lone life — within the pale —

Beyond the passion. Nay — she held with Edward,

At least methought she held with holy Edward, <sup>30</sup>

That marriage was half sin.

*Harold.* A lesson worth Finger and thumb — thus *(snaps his fingers)*.

And my answer to it — See here — an interwoven H and E ! Take thou this ring ; I will demand his ward

From Edward when I come again. Ay, would she ?

She to shut up my blossom in the dark !

Thou art my nun, thy cloister in mine arms.

*Edith (taking the ring).* Yea, but Earl Tostig —

*Harold.* That's a truer fear ! For if the North take fire, I should be back ;

I shall be, soon enough.

*Edith.* Ay, but last night

An evil dream that ever came and went —

*Harold.* A gnat that vex't thy pillow ! Had I been by, I would have spoil'd his horn. My girl, what was it ?

*Edith.* O that thou wert not going ! For so methought it was our marriage-morn,

And while we stood together, a dead man

Rose from behind the altar, tore away My marriage ring, and rent my bridal veil ;

And then I turn'd, and saw the church all fill'd

With dead men upright from their graves, and all <sup>50</sup>

The dead men made at thee to murder thee,

But thou didst back thyself against a pillar,

And strike among them with thy battle-axe —

There, what a dream !

*Harold.* Well, well — a dream — no more !

*Edith.* Did not Heaven speak to men in dreams of old ?

*Harold.* Ay — well — of old. I tell thee what, my child ;

Thou hast misread this merry dream of thine.

Taken the rifted pillars of the wood For smooth stone columns of the

sanctuary, The shadows of a hundred fat dead deer <sup>60</sup>

For dead men's ghosts. True, that the battle-axe

Was out of place ; it should have been the bow. —

Come, thou shalt dream no more such dreams ; I swear it,

By mine own eyes — and these two sapphires — these

Twin rubies, that are amulets against all

The kisses of all kind of woman-kind

In Flanders, till the sea shall roll me back

To tumble at thy feet.

*Edith.* That would but shame me, Rather than make me vain. The sea may roll

Sand, shingle, shore-weed, not the living rock <sup>70</sup>  
Which guards the land.

*Harold.* Except it be a soft one,  
And under-eaten to the fall. Mine amulet —

This last — upon thine eyelids, to shut in  
A happier dream. Sleep, sleep, and thou shalt see

My greyhounds fleeting like a beam of light,  
And hear my peregrine and her bells in heaven;

And other bells on earth, which yet are heaven's;  
Guess what they be.

*Edith.* He cannot guess who knows.  
Farewell, my king.

*Harold.* Not yet, but then — my queen. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter ALDWYTH from the thicket.*

*Aldwyth.* The kiss that charms thine eyelids into sleep <sup>80</sup>  
Will hold mine waking. Hate him? I could love him

More, tenfold, than this fearful child can do;

Griffyth I hated; why not hate the foe

Of England? Griffyth, when I saw him flee,

Chased deer-like up his mountains, all the blood

That should have only pulsed for Griffyth beat

For his pursuer. I love him, or think I love him.

If he were King of England, I his queen,

I might be sure of it. Nay, I do love him. —

She must be cloister'd somehow, lest the king <sup>90</sup>

Should yield his ward to Harold's will. What harm?

She hath but blood enough to live, not love. —

When Harold goes and Tostig, shall I play

The craftier Tostig with him? fawn upon him?

Chime in with all? 'O thou moresaint than king!'

And that were true enough. 'O blessed relics!'

'O Holy Peter!' If he found me thus, Harold might hate me; he is broad and honest,

Breathing an easy gladness — not like Aldwyth —

For which I strangely love him. Should not England <sup>100</sup>

Love Aldwyth, if she stay the feuds that part

The sons of Godwin from the sons of Alfgar

By such a marrying? Courage, noble Aldwyth!

Let all thy people bless thee! Our wild Tostig,

Edward hath made him earl; he would be king.

The dog that snapt the shadow dropt the bone.

I trust he may do well, this Gamel, whom

I play upon, that he may play the note

Whereat the dog shall howl and run, and Harold

Hear the King's music, all alone with him, <sup>110</sup>

Pronounced his heir of England.

I see the goal and half the way to it. — Peace-lover is our Harold for the sake

Of England's wholeness — so — to shake the North

With earthquake and disruption — some division —

Then fling mine own fair person in the gap

A sacrifice to Harold, a peace-offering, A scapegoat marriage — all the sins of both

The houses on mine head — then a fair life

And bless the Queen of England!

*Morcar (coming from the thicket).* Art thou assured <sup>120</sup>

By this, that Harold loves but Edith? *Aldwyth.* Morcar!

Why creep'st thou like a timorous beast of prey

Out of the bush by night? *Morcar.* I follow'd thee.

*Aldwyth.* Follow my lead, and I will make thee earl.

*Morcar.* What lead then? *Aldwyth.* Thou shalt flash it secretly

Among the good Northumbrian folk,  
that I —

That Harold loves me — yea, and presently

That I and Harold are betroth'd — and last —

Perchance that Harold wrongs me ;  
tho' I would not 129

That it should come to that.  
*Morcar.* I will both flash  
And thunder for thee.

*Aldwyth.* I said 'secretly ;'  
It is the flash that murders, the poor  
thunder

Never harm'd head.  
*Morcar.* But thunder may bring  
down

That which the flash hath stricken.  
*Aldwyth.* Down with Tostig!

That first of all. — And when doth  
Harold go ?

*Morcar.* To-morrow — first to Bosham, then to Flanders.

*Aldwyth.* Not to come back till Tostig shall have shown

And redden'd with his people's blood  
the teeth

That shall be broken by us — yea, and thou

Chair'd in his place. Good-night, and  
dream thyself 140

Their chosen earl. [*Exit Aldwyth.*]

*Morcar.* Earl first, and after that  
Who knows I may not dream myself  
their king ?

## ACT II

SCENE I. — SEASHORE. PONTIEU.  
NIGHT.

*HAROLD and his MEN, wrecked.*

*Harold.* Friends, in that last inhospitable plunge  
Our boat hath burst her ribs ; but ours  
are whole ;

I have but bark'd my hands.

*Attendant.* I dug mine into  
My old fast friend the shore, and clinging thus

Felt the remorseless outdraught of the  
deep

Haul like a great strong fellow at my  
legs

And then I rose and ran. The blast  
that came

So suddenly hath fallen as suddenly —  
Put thou the comet and this blast together —

*Harold.* Put thou thyself and mother-wit together. 10

Be not a fool !

*Enter FISHERMEN with torches, HAROLD going up to one of them, ROLF.*

Wicked sea-will-o'-the-wisp !  
Wolf of the shore ! dog, with thy lying  
lights

Thou hast betray'd us on these rocks  
of thine !

*Rolf.* Ay, but thou liest as loud as  
the black herring-pond behind thee.  
We be fishermen ; I came to see after  
my nets.

*Harold.* To drag us into them. Fishermen ? devils !

Who, while ye fish for men with your  
false fires,

Let the great devil fish for your own  
souls. 20

*Rolf.* Nay then, we be liker the  
blessed Apostles ; they were fishers of  
men, Father Jean says.

*Harold.* I had liefer that the fish had  
swallowed me,

Like Jonah, than have known there  
were such devils.

What's to be done ?

[*To his Men — goes apart with them.*]

*Fisherman.* Rolf, what fish did swallow  
Jonah ?

*Rolf.* A whale ! 29

*Fisherman.* Then a whale to a whelk  
we have swallowed the King of England.  
I saw him over there. Look thee,  
Rolf, when I was down in the fever,  
she was down with the hunger, and  
thou didst stand by her and give her  
thy crabs, and set her up again, till  
now, by the patient Saints, she's as  
crabb'd as ever.

*Rolf.* And I'll give her my crabs  
again, when thou art down again. 40

*Fisherman.* I thank thee, Rolf. Run  
thou to Count Guy ; he is hard at  
hand. Tell him what hath crept into  
our creel, and he will fee thee as freely  
as he will wrench this outlander's ransom  
out of him — and why not ? for  
what right had he to get himself  
wrecked on another man's land ?

*Rolf.* Thou art the human-hearted-  
est, Christian-charitiest of all crab-  
catchers. Share and share alike! <sup>51</sup>

[*Exit.*

*Harold* (to Fisherman). Fellow, dost  
thou catch crabs?

*Fisherman.* As few as I may in a  
wind, and less than I would in a calm.  
Ay!

*Harold.* I have a mind that thou  
shalt catch no more.

*Fisherman.* How?

*Harold.* I have a mind to brain thee  
with mine axe. <sup>58</sup>

*Fisherman.* Ay, do, do, and our  
great count-crab will make his nippers  
meet in thine heart; he'll sweat it out  
of thee, he'll sweat it out of thee!  
Look, he's here! He'll speak for  
himself. Hold thine own, if thou  
canst!

*Enter* GUY, COUNT OF PONTIEU.

*Harold.* Guy, Count of Ponthieu?

*Guy.* Harold, Earl of Wessex!

*Harold.* Thy villains with their ly-  
ing lights have wreck'd us!

*Guy.* Art thou not Earl of Wessex?

*Harold.* In mine earldom  
A man may hang gold bracelets on a  
bush,

And leave them for a year, and com-  
ing back <sup>70</sup>

Find them again.

*Guy.* Thou art a mighty man  
In thine own earldom!

*Harold.* Were such murderous liars  
In Wessex—if I caught them, they  
should hang

Cliff-gibbeted for sea-marks, our sea-  
mew

Winging their only wail!

*Guy.* Ay, but my men  
Hold that the shipwreckt are accursed  
of God;—

What hinders me to hold with mine  
own men?

*Harold.* The Christian manhood of  
the man who reigns!

*Guy.* Ay, rave thy worst, but in  
our oubliettes

Thou shalt rot or ransom.—Hale him  
hence! <sup>80</sup>

[*To one of his Attendants.*  
Fly thou to William; tell him we  
have Harold.

## SCENE II

## BAYEUX. PALACE

COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM  
MALET.

*William.* We hold our Saxon wood-  
cock in the springe,  
But he begins to flutter. As I think  
He was thine host in England when I  
went

To visit Edward.

*Malet.* Yea, and there, my lord,  
To make allowance for their rougher  
fashions,

I found him all a noble host should be.

*William.* Thou art his friend. Thou  
know'st my claim on England  
Thro' Edward's promise. We have  
him in the toils;

And it were well if thou shouldst let  
him feel

How dense a fold of danger nets him  
round, <sup>10</sup>

So that he bristle himself against my  
will.

*Malet.* What would I do, my lord,  
if I were you?

*William.* What wouldst thou do?

*Malet.* My lord, he is thy guest.

*William.* Nay, by the splendor of  
God, no guest of mine.

He came not to see me, had past me by  
To hunt and hawk elsewhere, save  
for the fate

Which hunted *him* when that un-  
Saxon blast,

And bolts of thunder moulded in high  
heaven

To serve the Norman purpose, drave  
and crack'd

His boat on Ponthieu beach; where  
our friend Guy <sup>20</sup>

Had wrung his ransom from him by  
the rack,

But that I stept between and pur-  
chased him,

Translating his captivity from Guy  
To mine own hearth at Bayeux, where

he sits  
My ransom'd prisoner.

*Malet.* Well, if not with gold,  
With golden deeds and iron strokes  
that brought

Thy war with Brittany to a goodlier close

Than else had been, he paid his ransom back.

*William.* So that henceforth they are not like to league 29

With Harold against me.

*Malet.* A marvel, how He from the liquid sands of Coesnon Haled thy shore-swallow'd, armor'd Normans up

To fight for thee again!

*William.* Perchance against Their savor, save thou save him from himself.

*Malet.* But I should let him home again, my lord.

*William.* Simple! let fly the bird within the hand,  
To catch the bird again within the bush!

No.

Smooth thou my way, before he clash with me;

I want his voice in England for the crown, 40

I want thy voice with him to bring him round;

And being brave he must be subtly cow'd,

And being truthful wrought upon to swear

Vows that he dare not break. England our own

Thro' Harold's help, he shall be my dear friend

As well as thine, and thou thyself shalt have

Large lordship there of lands and territory.

*Malet.* I knew thy purpose; he and Wulfnoth never

Have met, except in public; shall they meet

In private? I have often talk'd with Wulfnoth, 50

And stuff'd the boy with fears, that these may act

On Harold when they meet.

*William.* Then let them meet!

*Malet.* I can but love this noble, honest Harold.

*William.* Love him! why not? thine is a loving office,

I have commission'd thee to save the man.

Help the good ship, showing the sunken rock,

Or he is wreckt for ever.

*Enter WILLIAM RUFUS.*

*William Rufus.* Father.

*William.* Well, boy.

*William Rufus.* They have taken away the toy thou gavest me,

The Norman knight.

*William.* Why, boy?

*William Rufus.* Because I broke The horse's leg—it was mine own to break; 60

I like to have my toys, and break them too.

*William.* Well, thou shalt have another Norman knight.

*William Rufus.* And may I break his legs?

*William.* Yea,—get thee gone!

*William Rufus.* I'll tell them I have had my way with thee.

[*Exit.*]

*Malet.* I never knew thee check thy will for aught

Save for the prattling of thy little ones.

*William.* Who shall be kings of England. I am heir

Of England by the promise of her king.

*Malet.* But there the great Assembly choose their king,

The choice of England is the voice of England. 70

*William.* I will be King of England by the laws,

The choice, and voice of England.

*Malet.* Can that be?

*William.* The voice of any people is the sword

That guards them, or the sword that beats them down.

Here comes the would-be what I will be—kinglike . . .

Tho' scarce at ease; for, save our meshes break,

More kinglike he than like to prove a king.

*Enter HAROLD, musing, with his eyes on the ground.*

He sees me not—and yet he dreams of me.

Earl, wilt thou fly my falcons this fair day?

They are of the best, strong-wing'd against the wind. 80

*Harold (looking up suddenly, having caught but the last word). Which way does it blow?*

*William.* Blowing for England, ha? Not yet. Thou hast not learnt thy quarters here.

The winds so cross and jostle among these towers.

*Harold.* Count of the Normans, thou hast ransom'd us, Maintain'd, and entertain'd us royally!

*William.* And thou for us hast fought as loyally, Which binds us friendship-fast for ever!

*Harold.* Good! But lest we turn the scale of courtesy By too much pressure on it, I would fain,

Since thou hast promised Wulfnoth home with us, 90

Be home again with Wulfnoth.

*William.* Stay — as yet Thou hast but seen how Norman hands can strike,

But walk'd our Norman field, scarce touch'd or tasted

The splendors of our court.

*Harold.* I am in no mood; I should be as the shadow of a cloud Crossing your light.

*William.* Nay, rest a week or two. And we will fill thee full of Norman sun, And send thee back among thine island mists

With laughter.

*Harold.* Count, I thank thee, but had rather

Breathe the free wind from off our Saxon downs, 100

Tho' charged with all the wet of all the west.

*William.* Why if thou wilt, so let it be — thou shalt.

That were a graceless hospitality To chain the free guest to the banquet-board;

To-morrow we will ride with thee to Harfleur,

And see thee shipt, and pray in thy behalf

For happier homeward winds than that which crack'd

Thy bark at Pontbieu, — yet to us, in faith,

A happy one — whereby we came to know

Thy valor and thy value, noble earl. 110 Ay, and perchance a happy one for thee,

Provided — I will go with thee to-morrow —

Nay — but there be conditions, easy ones,

So thou, fair friend, will take them easily.

*Enter PAGE.*

*Page.* My lord, there is a post from over seas

With news for thee. [Exit Page.]

*William.* Come, Malet, let us hear! [Exeunt Count William and Malet.]

*Harold.* Conditions? What conditions? pay him back

His ransom? 'easy' — that were easy — nay —

No money-lover he! What said the king?

I pray you do not go to Normandy.' And fate hath blown me hither, bound me too 121

With bitter obligation to the Count — Have I not fought it out? What did he mean?

There lodged a gleaming grimness in his eyes,

Gave his shorn smile the lie. The walls oppress me,

And yon huge keep that hinders half the heaven.

Free air! free field!

*Moves to go out. A Man-at-arms follows him.*

*Harold (to the Man-at-arms).* I need thee not. Why dost thou follow me?

*Man-at-arms.* I have the Count's commands to follow thee.

*Harold.* What then? Am I in danger in this court? 130

*Man-at-arms.* I cannot tell. I have the Count's commands.

*Harold.* Stand out of earshot then, and keep me still

In eyeshot.

*Man-at-arms.* Yea, lord Harold.

*Harold.* [Withdraws.] And arm'd men

Ever keep watch beside my chamber door,



And if I walk within the lonely wood,  
There is an arm'd man ever glides be-  
hind !

*Enter MALET.*

Why am I follow'd, haunted, harass'd,  
watch'd ?

See yonder !

[*Pointing to the Man-at-arms.*

*Malet.* 'T is the good Count's care  
for thee !

The Normans love thee not, nor thou  
the Normans,

Or — so they deem.

*Harold.* But wherefore is the wind,  
Which way soever the vane-arrow  
swing, <sup>141</sup>

Not ever fair for England ? Why, but  
now

He said — thou heard'st him — that I  
must not hence

Save on conditions.

*Malet.* So in truth he said.

*Harold.* Malet, thy mother was an  
Englishwoman ;

There somewhere beats an English  
pulse in thee !

*Malet.* Well — for my mother's sake

I love your England,

But for my father I love Normandy.

*Harold.* Speak for thy mother's  
sake, and tell me true.

*Malet.* Then for my mother's sake,  
and England's sake <sup>150</sup>

That suffers in the daily want of thee,  
Obey the Count's conditions, my good  
friend.

*Harold.* How, Malet, if they be not  
honorable !

*Malet.* Seem to obey them.

*Harold.* Better die than lie !

*Malet.* Choose therefore whether  
thou wilt have thy conscience

White as a maiden's hand, or whether  
England

Be shatter'd into fragments.

*Harold.* News from England ?

*Malet.* Morcar and Edwin have  
stirr'd up the thanes

Against thy brother Tostig's govern-  
ance ;

And all the North of Humber is one  
storm. <sup>160</sup>

*Harold.* I should be there, Malet, I  
should be there !

*Malet.* And Tostig in his own hall  
on suspicion

Hath massacred the thane that was  
his guest,

Gamel, the son of Orm ; and there be  
more

As villainously slain.

*Harold.* The wolf ! the beast !

Ill news for guests, ha, Malet ! More ?  
What more ?

What do they say ? did Edward know  
of this ?

*Malet.* They say his wife was know-  
ing and abetting.

*Harold.* They say his wife ! — To  
marry and have no husband

Makes the wife fool. My God, I  
should be there ! <sup>170</sup>

I'll hack my way to the sea.

*Malet.* Thou canst not, Harold ;  
Our duke is all between thee and the  
sea,

Our duke is all about thee like a God ;  
All passes block'd. Obey him, speak

him fair,  
For he is only debonair to those

That follow where he leads, but stark  
as death

To those that cross him. — Look thou,  
here is Wulfnoth !

I leave thee to thy talk with him  
alone ;

How wan, poor lad ! how sick and sad  
for home ! [*Exit Malet.*

*Harold (muttering).* Go not to Nor-  
mandy — go not to Nor-  
mandy ! <sup>180</sup>

*Enter WULFNOTH.*

Poor brother ! still a hostage !

*Wulfnoth.* Yea, and I  
Shall see the dewy kiss of dawn no

more  
Make blush the maiden-white of our

tall cliffs,  
Nor mark the sea-bird rouse himself

and hover  
Above the windy ripple, and fill the

sky  
With free sea-laughter — never — save

indeed  
Thou canst make yield this iron-

mooded duke  
To let me go.

*Harold.* Why, brother, so he will ;  
But on conditions. Canst thou guess

at them ?  
*Wulfnoth.* Draw nearer, — I was in

the corridor, <sup>190</sup>

I saw him coming with his brother  
Odo

The Bayeux bishop, and I hid myself.

*Harold.* They did thee wrong who  
made thee hostage; thou  
wast ever fearful.

*Wulfnoth.* And he spoke — I heard  
him —

'This Harold is not of the royal blood,  
Can have no right to the crown;' and  
Odo said,

'Thine is the right, for thine the might;  
he is here,

And yonder is thy keep.'

*Harold.* No, Wulfnoth, no!

*Wulfnoth.* And William laugh'd  
and swore that might was right,  
Far as he knew in this poor world of  
ours —

'Marry, the Saints must go along  
with us,

And, brother, we will find a way,' said  
he —

Yea, yea, he would be King of Eng-  
land.

*Harold.* Never!

*Wulfnoth.* Yea, but thou must not  
this way answer him.

*Harold.* Is it not better still to speak  
the truth?

*Wulfnoth.* Not here, or thou wilt  
never hence nor I;

For in the racing toward this golden  
goal

He turns not right or left, but tram-  
ples flat

Whatever thwarts him; hast thou  
never heard

His savagery at Alençon, — the town  
Hung out raw hides along their walls,  
and cried,

'Work for the tanner.'

*Harold.* That had anger'd me  
Had I been William.

*Wulfnoth.* Nay, but he had prison-  
ers,

He tore their eyes out, sliced their  
hands away,

And flung them streaming o'er the  
battlements

Upon the heads of those who walk'd  
within —

O, speak him fair, Harold, for thine  
own sake!

*Harold.* Your Welshman says, 'The  
Truth against the World,'

Much more the truth against myself.

*Wulfnoth.* Thyself?  
But for my sake, O brother! O, for  
my sake!

*Harold.* Poor Wulfnoth! do they  
not entreat thee well?

*Wulfnoth.* I see the blackness of  
my dungeon loom

Across their lamps of revel, and be-  
yond

The merriest murmurs of their ban-  
quet clank

The shackles that will bind me to the  
wall.

*Harold.* Too fearful still.

*Wulfnoth.* O, no, no — speak him  
fair!

Call it to temporize, and not to lie;  
Harold, I do not counsel thee to  
lie.

The man that hath to foil a murder-  
ous aim

May, surely, play with words.

*Harold.* Words are the man.  
Not even for thy sake, brother, would  
I lie.

*Wulfnoth.* Then for thine Edith?

*Harold.* There thou prick'st me  
deep.

*Wulfnoth.* And for our Mother  
England?

*Harold.* Deeper still.

*Wulfnoth.* And deeper still the  
deep-down oubliette,  
Down thirty feet below the smiling  
day —

In blackness — dogs' food thrown up-  
on thy head.

And over thee the suns arise and set,  
And the lark sings, the sweet stars  
come and go,

And men are at their markets, in their  
fields,

And woo their loves and have forgot-  
ten thee;

And thou art upright in thy living  
grave,

Where there is barely room to shift  
thy side,

And all thine England hath forgotten  
thee;

And he our lazy-pious Norman King,  
With all his Normans round him once  
again,

Counts his old beads, and hath forgot  
ten thee.

*Harold.* Thou art of my blood, and  
so methinks, my boy,  
Thy fears infect me beyond reason.  
Peace!

*Wulfnoth.* And then our fiery  
Tostig, while thy hands  
Are palsied here, if his Northumbrians  
rise 250

And hurl him from them, — I have  
heard the Normans  
Count upon this confusion — may he  
not make

A league with William, so to bring  
him back?

*Harold.* That lies within the sha-  
dow of the chance.

*Wulfnoth.* And like a river in flood  
thro' a burst dam  
Descends the ruthless Norman — our  
good King

Kneels mumbling some old bone —  
our helpless folk  
Are wash'd away, wailing, in their  
own blood —

*Harold.* Wailing! not warring?  
Boy, thou hast forgotten  
That thou art English.

*Wulfnoth.* Then our modest wo-  
men — 260  
I know the Norman license — thine  
own Edith —

*Harold.* No more! I will not hear  
thee — William comes.

*Wulfnoth.* I dare not well be seen  
in talk with thee.  
Make thou not mention that I spake  
with thee.

[*Moves away to the back of the stage.*]

Enter WILLIAM, MALET, and OFFI-  
CERS.

*Officer.* We have the man that  
raill'd against thy birth.

*William.* Tear out his tongue.

*Officer.* He shall not rail again.  
He said that he should see confusion  
fall

On thee and on thine house.

*William.* Tear out his eyes,  
And plunge him into prison.

*Officer.* It shall be done.  
[*Exit Officer.*]

*William.* Look not amazed, fair  
earl! Better leave undone 270  
Than do by halves — tongueless and  
eyeless, prison'd —

*Harold.* Better methinks have slain  
the man at once!

*William.* We have respect for  
man's immortal soul,  
We seldom take man's life, except in  
war;

It frights the traitor more to maim  
and blind.

*Harold.* In mine own land I should  
have scorn'd the man,  
Or lash'd his rascal back, and let him  
go.

*William.* And let him go? To  
slander thee again!  
Yet in thine own land in thy father's  
day

They blinded my young kinsman, Al-  
fred — ay, 280  
Some said it was thy father's deed.

*Harold.* They lied.

*William.* But thou and he — whom  
at thy word, for thou  
Art known a speaker of the truth, I  
free

From this foul charge —

*Harold.* Nay, nay, he freed himself  
By oath and compurgation from the  
charge.

The King, the lords, the people clear'd  
him of it.

*William.* But thou and he drove  
our good Normans out  
From England, and this rankles in us  
yet.

Archbishop Robert hardly escaped  
with life.

*Harold.* Archbishop Robert! Ro-  
bert the Archbishop! 290  
Robert of Jumilges, he that —

*Malet.* Quiet! quiet!

*Harold.* Count! if there sat with-  
in the Norman chair  
A ruler all for England — one who  
fill'd

All offices, all bishoprics with Eng-  
lish —

We could not move from Dover to the  
Humber

Saving thro' Norman bishoprics — I  
say

Ye would applaud that Norman who  
should drive

The stranger to the fiends!

*William.* Why, that is reason!  
Warrior thou art, and mighty wise  
withal!

Ay, ay, but many among our Norman lords <sup>300</sup>

Hate thee for this, and press upon me — saying

God and the sea have given thee to our hands

To plunge thee into lifelong prison here; —

Yet I hold out against them, as I may, Yea — would hold out, yea, tho' they should revolt —

For thou hast done the battle in my cause.

I am thy fastest friend in Normandy.

*Harold.* I am doubly bound to thee — if this be so.

*William.* And I would bind thee more, and would myself <sup>309</sup>

Be bounden to thee more.

*Harold.* Then let me hence With Wulfnoth to King Edward.

*William.* So we will.

We hear he hath not long to live.

*Harold.* It may be.

*William.* Why then, the heir of England, who is he?

*Harold.* The Atheling is nearest to the throne.

*William.* But sickly, slight, half-witted and a child,

Will England have him king?

*Harold.* It may be, no.

*William.* And hath King Edward not pronounced his heir?

*Harold.* Not that I know.

*William.* When he was here in Normandy,

He loved us and we him, because we found him

A Norman of the Normans.

*Harold.* So did we.

*William.* A gentle, gracious, pure and saintly man! <sup>321</sup>

And grateful to the hand that shielded him,

He promised that if ever he were king

In England, he would give his kingly voice

To me as his successor. Knowest thou this?

*Harold.* I learn it now.

*William.* Thou knowest I am his cousin,

And that my wife descends from Alfred?

*Harold.* Ay.

*William.* Who hath a better claim then to the crown?

So that ye will not crown the Atheling?

*Harold.* None that I know — if that but hung upon <sup>330</sup>

King Edward's will.

*William.* Wilt thou uphold my claim?

*Malet (aside to Harold).* Be careful of thine answer, my good friend.

*Wulfnoth (aside to Harold).* O Harold, for my sake and for thine own!

*Harold.* Ay . . . if the King have not revoked his promise.

*William.* But hath he done it then?

*Harold.* Not that I know.

*William.* Good, good, and thou wilt help me to the crown?

*Harold.* Ay — if the Witan will consent to this.

*William.* Thou art the mightiest voice in England, man,

Thy voice will lead the Witan — shall I have it? <sup>339</sup>

*Wulfnoth (aside to Harold).* O Harold, if thou love thine Edith, ay.

*Harold.* Ay, if —

*Malet (aside to Harold).* Thine 'ifs' will sear thine eyes out — ay.

*William.* I ask thee, wilt thou help me to the crown?

And I will make thee my great earl of earls,

Foremost in England and in Normandy;

Thou shalt be verily king — all but the name —

For I shall most sojourn in Normandy; And thou be my vice-king in England.

Speak.

*Wulfnoth (aside to Harold).* Ay, brother — for the sake of England — ay.

*Harold.* My lord —

*Malet (aside to Harold).* Take heed now.

*Harold.* Ay.

*William.* I am content, For thou art truthful, and thy word

thy bond. <sup>350</sup>

To-morrow will we ride with thee to Harfleur. [*Exit William*]

*Malet.* Harold, I am thy friend,  
one life with thee,  
And even as I should bless thee sav-  
ing mine,  
I thank thee now for having saved  
thyself. [*Exit Malet.*]

*Harold.* For having lost myself to  
save myself,  
Said 'ay' when I meant 'no,' lied like  
a lad  
That dreads the pendent scourge, said  
'ay' for 'no'!  
Ay! No! — he hath not bound me by  
an oath —  
Is 'ay' an oath? is 'ay' strong as an  
oath?

Or is it the same sin to break my word  
As break mine oath? He call'd my  
word my bond! <sup>361</sup>  
He is a liar who knows I am a liar,  
And makes believe that he believes  
my word —  
The crime be on his head — not  
bounden — no.

[*Suddenly doors are flung open,  
discovering in an inner hall  
Count William in his state robes,  
seated upon his throne between  
two Bishops, Odo of Bayeux  
being one; in the centre of the  
hall an ark covered with cloth of  
gold, and on either side of it the  
Norman Barons.*]

*Enter a JAILOR before WILLIAM'S  
throne.*

*William (to Jailor).* Knave, hast  
thou let thy prisoner scape?

*Jailor.* Sir Count,  
He had but one foot, he must have hopt  
away,  
Yea, some familiar spirit must have  
help'd him.

*William.* Woe, knave, to thy fa-  
miliar and to thee!

Give me thy keys. [*They fall clashing.*]

Nay, let them lie. Stand there and  
wait my will. <sup>370</sup>

[*The Jailor stands aside.*]  
*William (to Harold).* Hast thou  
such trustless jailors in thy  
North?

*Harold.* We have few prisoners in  
mine earldom there,  
So less chance for false keepers.

*William.* We have heard

Of thy just, mild, and equal govern-  
ance;

Honor to thee! thou art perfect in all  
honor!

Thy naked word thy bond! confirm  
it now

Before our gather'd Norman baronage,  
For they will not believe thee — as I  
believe.

[*Descends from his throne and  
stands by the ark.*]

Let all men here bear witness of our  
bond!

[*Beckons to Harold, who advances.  
Enter MALET behind him.*]

Lay thou thy hand upon this golden  
pall! <sup>380</sup>

Behold the jewel of Saint Pancratius  
Woven into the gold. Swear thou on  
this!

*Harold.* What should I swear?  
Why should I swear on this?

*William (savagely).* Swear thou to  
help me to the crown of Eng-  
land.

*Malet (whispering Harold).* My  
friend, thou hast gone too far  
to palter now.

*Wulfnoth (whispering Harold).*  
Swear thou to-day, to-morrow  
is thine own.

*Harold.* I swear to help thee to the  
crown of England

According as King Edward promises.  
*William.* Thou must swear abso-  
lutely, noble earl.

*Malet (whispering).* Delay is death  
to thee, ruin to England. <sup>390</sup>

*Wulfnoth (whispering).* Swear,  
dearest brother, I beseech thee,  
swear!

*Harold (putting his hand on the  
jewel).* I swear to help thee to  
the crown of England.

*William.* Thanks, truthful earl; I  
did not doubt thy word,  
But that my barons might believe thy  
word,

And that the Holy Saints of Normandy  
When thou art home in England, with  
thine own,

Might strengthen thee in keeping of  
thy word,

I made thee swear. Show him by  
whom he hath sworn.

[*The two Bishops advance, and*

*raise the cloth of gold. The bodies and bones of Saints are seen lying in the ark.*

The holy bones of all the canonized  
From all the holiest shrines in Nor-  
mandy! <sup>400</sup>

*Harold.* Horrible!

*[They let the cloth fall again.]*

*William.* Ay, for thou hast sworn  
an oath  
Which, if not kept, would make the  
hard earth rive  
To the very devil's horns, the bright  
sky cleave  
To the very feet of God, and send her  
hosts  
Of injured Saints to scatter sparks of  
plague  
Thro' all your cities, blast your in-  
fants, dash  
The torch of war among your stand-  
ing corn,  
Dabble your hearths with your own  
blood. — Enough!  
Thou wilt not break it! I, the count  
— the king  
Thy friend — am grateful for thine  
honest oath, <sup>410</sup>  
Not coming fiercely like a conqueror,  
now,  
But softly as a bridegroom to his own.  
For I shall rule according to your  
laws,  
And make your ever-jarring earldoms  
move  
To music and in order — Angle, Jute,  
Dane, Saxon, Norman, help to build  
a throne  
Out-towering hers of France. — The  
wind is fair  
For England now. To-night we will  
be merry.  
To-morrow will I ride with thee to  
Harfleur.  
*[Exeunt William and all the Nor-  
man Barons, etc.]*  
*Harold.* To-night we will be merry  
— and to-morrow — <sup>420</sup>  
Juggler and bastard — bastard — he  
hates that most —  
William the tanner's bastard! Would  
he heard me!  
O God, that I were in some wide,  
waste field  
With nothing but my battle-axe and  
him

To spatter his brains! Why, let earth  
rive, gulf in

These cursed Normans — yea, and  
mine own self!

Cleave heaven, and send thy Saints  
that I may say

Even to their faces, 'If ye side with  
William

Ye are not noble!' How their pointed  
fingers

Glared at me! Am I Harold, Harold,  
son <sup>430</sup>

Of our great Godwin? Lo! I touch  
mine arms,

My limbs — they are not mine — they  
are a liar's —

I mean to be a liar — I am not bound —  
Stigand shall give me absolution for  
it —

Did the chest move? did it move? I  
am utter craven!

O Wulfnoth, Wulfnoth, brother, thou  
hast betray'd me!

*Wulfnoth.* Forgive me, brother, I  
will live here and die.

*Enter PAGE.*

*Page.* My lord! the duke awaits  
thee at the banquet.

*Harold.* Where they eat dead men's  
flesh, and drink their blood.

*Page.* My lord — <sup>440</sup>

*Harold.* I know your Norman cook-  
ery is so spiced,

It masks all this.

*Page.* My lord! thou art white as  
death.

*Harold.* With looking on the dead.  
Am I so white?

Thy duke will seem the darker. Hence,  
I follow. *[Exeunt.]*

### ACT III

#### SCENE I. — THE KING'S PALACE. LONDON

KING EDWARD, *dying on a couch, and  
by him standing the QUEEN, HAR-  
OLD, ARCHBISHOP STIGAND, GURTH,  
LEOFWIN, ARCHBISHOP ALDRED,  
ALDWYTH, and EDITH.*

*Stigand.* Sleeping or dying there?  
If this be death,

Then our great Council wait to crown  
thee king —

Come hither, I have a power;

[To Harold.

They call me near, for I am close to thee

And England—I, old shrivell'd Stigand, I,

Dry as an old wood-fungus on a dead tree,

I have a power!

See here this little key about my neck!  
There lies a treasure buried down in Ely.

If e'er the Norman grow too hard for thee,

Ask me for this at thy most need, son Harold,

At thy most need—not sooner.

Harold. So I will.

Stigand. Red gold—a hundred purses—yea, and more!

If thou canst make a wholesome use of these

To chink against the Norman, I do believe

My old crook'd spine would bud out two young wings

To fly to heaven straight with.

Harold. Thank thee, father!  
Thou art English, Edward too is English now,

He hath clean repented of his Normanism.

Stigand. Ay, as the libertine repents who cannot

Make done undone, when thro' his dying sense

Shrills, 'Lost thro' thee!' They have built their castles here;

Our priories are Norman; the Norman adder

Hath bitten us; we are poison'd; our dear England

Is demi-Norman. He!—

[Pointing to King Edward, sleeping.

Harold. I would I were  
As holy and as passionless as he!

That I might rest as calmly! Look at him—

The rosy face, and long down-silvering beard,

The brows unwrinkled as a summer mere.—

Stigand. A summer mere with sudden wreckful gusts

From a side-gorge. Passionless? How he flamed

When Tostig's anger'd earldom flung him, nay,

He fain had calcined all Northumbria To one black ash, but that thy patriot

passion,  
Siding with our great Council against

Tostig,  
Out-passion'd his! Holy? ay, ay, for-

sooth,  
A conscience for his own soul, not his

realm;  
A twilight conscience lighted thro' a

chink;  
Thine by the sun; nay, by some sun

to be,  
When all the world hath learnt to

speak the truth,

And lying were self-murder by that State

Which was the exception.

Harold. That sun may God speed!

Stigand. Come, Harold, shake the cloud off!

Harold. 'Can I, father?  
Our Tostig parted cursing me and

England;  
Our sister hates us for his banishment;

He hath gone to kindle Norway against England,

And Wulfnoth is alone in Normandy.  
For when I rode with William down

to Harfleur,  
'Wulfnoth is sick,' he said; 'he cannot follow;'

Then with that friendly-fiendly smile of his,

'We have learnt to love him, let him a little longer

Remain a hostage for the loyalty Of Godwin's house.' As far as touches

Wulfnoth  
I that so prized plain word and naked

truth  
Have sinn'd against it—all in vain.

Leofwin. Good brother,  
By all the truths that ever priest hath

preach'd,  
Of all the lies that ever men have lied,

Thine is the pardonablest.

Harold. Maybe so!  
I think it so, I think I am a fool

To think it can be otherwise than so.

Stigand. Tut, tut, I have absolved thee. Dost thou scorn me,  
Because I had my Canterbury pallium

From one whom they disposed ?

*Harold.* No, Stigand, no !  
*Stigand.* Is naked truth actable in  
true life ?

I have heard a saying of thy father  
Godwin,

That, were a man of state nakedly  
true,

Men would but take him for the craft-  
ier liar.

*Leofwin.* Be men less delicate than  
the devil himself ?

I thought that naked Truth would  
shame the devil,

The devil is so modest.

*Gurth.* He never said it !

*Leofwin.* Be thou not stupid-honest,  
brother Gurth !

*Harold.* Better to be a liar's dog, and  
hold

My master honest, than believe that  
lying

And ruling men are fatal twins that  
cannot

Move one without the other. Edward  
wakes ! —

Dazed — he hath seen a vision.

*Edward.* The green tree !  
Then a great Angel past along the  
highest

Crying, 'The doom of England !' and  
at once

He stood beside me, in his grasp a  
sword

Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft  
the tree

From off the bearing trunk, and hurl'd  
it from him

Three fields away, and then he dash'd  
and drench'd,

He dyed, he soak'd the trunk with  
human blood,

And brought the sunder'd tree again,  
and set it

Straight on the trunk, that, thus bap-  
tized in blood,

Grew ever high and higher, beyond  
my seeing,

And shot out sidelong boughs across  
the deep

That dropt themselves, and rooted in  
far isles

Beyond my seeing ; and the great  
Angel rose

And past again along the highest, cry-  
ing,

'The doom of England !' — Tostig  
raise my head !

[*Falls back senseless.*

*Harold (raising him).* Let Harold  
serve for Tostig !

*Queen.* Harold served  
Tostig so ill, he cannot serve for Tos-  
tig !

Ay, raise his head, for thou hast laid  
it low !

The sickness of our saintly King, for  
whom

My prayers go up as fast as my tears  
fall,

I well believe, hath mainly drawn it-  
self

From lack of Tostig — thou hast ban-  
ish'd him.

*Harold.* Nay — but the Council, and  
the King himself.

*Queen.* Thou hatest him, hatest him !

*Harold (coldly).* Ay — Stigand, un-  
riddle

This vision, canst thou ?

*Stigand.* Dotage !

*Edward (starting up).* It is finish'd.

I have built the Lord a house — the  
Lord hath dwelt

In darkness. I have built the Lord a  
house —

Palms, flowers, pomegranates, golden  
cherubim

With twenty-cubit wings from wall to  
wall —

I have built the Lord a house — sing,  
Asaph ! clash

The cymbal, Heman ! blow the trum-  
pet, priest !

Fall, cloud, and fill the house — lo !  
my two pillars,

Jachin and Boaz !

[*Seeing Harold and Gurth.*

Harold, Gurth, — where am I ?

Where is the charter of our West-  
minster ?

*Stigand.* It lies beside thee, king,  
upon thy bed.

*Edward.* Sign, sign at once — take,  
sign it, Stigand, Aldred !

Sign it, my good son Harold, Gurth,  
and Leofwin !

Sign it, my Queen !

*All.* We have sign'd it.

*Edward.* It is finish'd !

The kingliest abbey in all Christian  
lands,



The lordliest, loftiest minster ever  
built

To Holy Peter in our English isle !

Let me be buried there, and all our  
kings,

And all our just and wise and holy  
men

That shall be born hereafter. It is  
finish'd ! <sup>120</sup>

Hast thou had absolution for thine  
oath ? [To Harold.

*Harold.* Stigand hath given me ab-  
solution for it.

*Edward.* Stigand is not canonical  
enough

To save thee from the wrath of Nor-  
man Saints.

*Stigand.* Norman enough ! Be there  
no Saints of England

To help us from their brethren yonder ?

*Edward.* Prelate,  
The Saints are one, but those of Nor-  
manland

Are mightier than our own. — Ask it  
of Aldred. [To Harold.

*Aldred.* It shall be granted him, my  
king ; for he

Who vows a vow to strangle his own  
mother <sup>130</sup>

Is guiltier keeping this than breaking  
it.

*Edward.* O friends, I shall not over-  
live the day !

*Stigand.* Why, then the throne is  
empty. Who inherits ?

For tho' we be not bound by the king's  
voice

In making of a king, yet the king's  
voice

Is much toward his making. Who  
inherits ?

Edgar the Atheling ?

*Edward.* No, no, but Harold.  
I love him ; he hath served me ; none  
but he

Can rule all England. Yet the curse  
is on him

For swearing falsely by those blessed  
bones ; <sup>140</sup>

He did not mean to keep his vow.

*Harold.* Not mean  
To make our England Norman.

*Edward.* There spake Godwin,  
Who hated all the Normans ; but their  
Saints

Have heard thee, Harold.

*Edith.* O, my lord, my King !  
He knew not whom he sware by.

*Edward.* Yea, I know  
He knew not, but those heavenly ears  
have heard,

Their curse is on him ; wilt thou bring  
another,

Edith, upon his head ?

*Edith.* No, no, not I !

*Edward.* Why, then thou must not  
wed him.

*Harold.* Wherefore, wherefore ?

*Edward.* O son, when thou didst  
tell me of thine oath, <sup>150</sup>

I sorrow'd for my random promise  
given

To yon fox-lion. I did not dream then  
I should be king. — My son, the Saints  
are virgins ;

They love the white rose of virginity,  
The cold, white lily blowing in her  
cell.

I have been myself a virgin : and I  
sware

To consecrate my virgin here to Hea-  
ven —

The silent, cloister'd, solitary life,  
A life of lifelong prayer against the  
curse

That lies on thee and England.

*Harold.* No, no, no !

*Edward.* Treble denial of the tongue  
of flesh, <sup>161</sup>

Like Peter's when he fell, and thou  
wilt have

To wait for it like Peter. O my son !  
Are all oaths to be broken then, all  
promises

Made in our agony for help from Hea-  
ven ?

Son, there is one who loves thee ; and  
a wife.

What matters who, so she be service-  
able

In all obedience, as mine own hath  
been ?

God bless thee, wedded daughter !

[Laying his hand on the Queen's  
head.

*Queen.* Bless thou too  
That brother whom I love beyond the  
rest, <sup>170</sup>

My banish'd Tostig.

*Edward.* All the sweet Saints bless  
him !

Spare and forbear him, Harold, if he comes!

And let him pass unscathed; he loves me, Harold!

Be kindly to the Normans left among us,

Who follow'd me for love! and dear son, swear

When thou art king, to see my solemn vow

Accomplish'd.

*Harold.* Nay, dear lord, for I have sworn

Not to swear falsely twice.

*Edward.* Thou wilt not swear?

*Harold.* I cannot.

*Edward.* Then on thee remains the curse,

Harold, if thou embrace her; and on thee, 180

Edith, if thou abide it, —

[*The King swoons; Edith falls and kneels by the couch.*]

*Stigand.* He hath swoon'd. Death? — no, as yet a breath.

*Harold.* Look up! look up! Edith!

*Aldred.* Confuse her not; she hath begun

Her lifelong prayer for thee.

*Aldwyth.* O noble Harold, I would thou couldst have sworn.

*Harold.* For thine own pleasure?

*Aldwyth.* No, but to please our dying King, and those

Who make thy good their own — all England, earl.

*Aldred.* I would thou couldst have sworn. Our holy King

Hath given his virgin lamb to Holy Church 189

To save thee from the curse.

*Harold.* Alas! poor man, His promise brought it on me.

*Aldred.* O good son! That knowledge made him all the carefuller

To find a means whereby the curse might glance

From thee and England.

*Harold.* Father, we so loved —

*Aldred.* The more the love, the mightier is the prayer;

The more the love, the more acceptable

The sacrifice of both your loves to Heaven.

No sacrifice to Heaven, no help from Heaven;

That runs thro' all the faiths of all the world.

And sacrifice there must be, for the King 200

Is holy, and hath talk'd with God, and seen

A shadowing horror; there are signs in heaven —

*Harold.* Your comet came and went.

*Aldred.* And signs on earth!

Knowest thou Senlac hill?

*Harold.* I know all Sussex; A good entrenchment for a perilous hour!

*Aldred.* Pray God that come not suddenly! There is one

Who passing by that hill three nights ago —

He shook so that he scarce could out with it —

Heard, heard —

*Harold.* The wind in his hair?

*Aldred.* A ghostly horn Blowing continually, and faint battle-hymns, 210

And cries, and clashes, and the groans of men;

And dreadful shadows strove upon the hill,

And dreadful lights crept up from out the marsh —

Corpse-candles gliding over nameless graves —

*Harold.* At Senlac?

*Aldred.* Senlac.

*Edward.* (*waking*). Senlac! Sanguelac,

The Lake of Blood!

*Stigand.* This lightning before death

Plays on the word, — and Normanizes too!

*Harold.* Hush, father, hush!

*Edward.* Thou uncanonical fool, Wilt thou play with the thunder?

North and South

Thunder together, showers of blood are blown 220

Before a never-ending blast, and hiss Against the blaze they cannot quench — a lake.

A sea of blood—we are drown'd in  
 blood—for God  
 Has fill'd the quiver, and Death has  
 drawn the bow—  
 Sanguelac! Sanguelac! the arrow!  
 the arrow! [*Dies.*]  
*Stigand.* It is the arrow of death in  
 his own heart—  
 And our great Council wait to crown  
 thee King.

## SCENE II

IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE  
 NEAR LONDON

*Edith.* Crown'd, crown'd and lost,  
 crown'd King—and lost to  
 me!

(*Singing.*)

Two young lovers in winter weather,  
 None to guide them,  
 Walk'd at night on the misty heather;  
 Night, as black as a raven's feather;  
 Both were lost and found together,  
 • None beside them.

That is the burthen of it—lost and  
 found  
 Together in the cruel river Swale  
 A hundred years ago; and there's an-  
 other, 10

Lost, lost, the light of day,

To which the lover answers lovingly:

'I am beside thee.'  
 Lost, lost, we have lost the way.  
 'Love, I will guide thee.'  
 Whither, O whither? into the river,  
 Where we two may be lost together,  
 And lost for ever? 'O, never! O, never!  
 Tho' we be lost and be found together.'

Some think they loved within the  
 pale forbidden 20  
 By Holy Church; but who shall say?  
 the truth  
 Was lost in that fierce North, where  
 they were lost,  
 Where all good things are lost, where  
 Tostig lost  
 The good hearts of his people. It is  
 Harold!

*Enter HAROLD.*

Harold the King!

*Harold.* Call me not King, but  
 Harold.

*Edith.* Nay, thou art King!

*Harold.* Thine, thine, or King or  
 churl!

My girl, thou hast been weeping;  
 turn not thou

Thy face away, but rather let me be  
 King of the moment to thee, and com-  
 mand

That kiss my due when subject, which  
 will make 30

My kingship kinglier to me than to  
 reign

King of the world without it.

*Edith.* Ask me not,  
 Lest I should yield it, and the second  
 curse

Descend upon thine head, and thou  
 be only

King of the moment over England.

*Harold.* Edith,  
 Tho' somewhat less a king to my true  
 self

Than ere they crown'd me one, for I  
 have lost

Somewhat of upright stature thro'  
 mine oath,

Yet thee I would not lose, and sell  
 not thou

Our living passion for a dead man's  
 dream; 40

Stigand believed he knew not what  
 he spake.

O God! I cannot help it, but at  
 times

They seem to me too narrow, all the  
 faiths

Of this grown world of ours, whose  
 baby eye

Saw them sufficient. Fool and wise,  
 I fear

This curse, and scorn it. But a little  
 light!—

And on it falls the shadow of the  
 priest;

Heaven yield us more! for better,  
 Woden, all

Our cancell'd warrior-gods, our grim  
 Walhalla,

Eternal war, than that the Saints at  
 peace, 50

The Holiest of our Holiest One, should  
 be

This William's fellow-tricksters; —  
better die

Than credit this, for death is death,  
or else

Lifts us beyond the lie. Kiss me —  
thou art not

A holy sister yet, my girl, to fear  
There might be more than brother in  
my kiss,

And more than sister in thine own.

*Edith.* I dare not.

*Harold.* Scared by the church —  
'Love for a whole life long.'

When was that sung?

*Edith.* Here to the nightingales.

*Harold.* Their anthems of no church,  
how sweet they are! <sup>60</sup>

Nor kingly priest, nor priestly king  
to cross

Their billings ere they nest.

*Edith.* They are but of spring.  
They fly the winter change — not so  
with us —

No wings to come and go.

*Harold.* But wing'd souls flying  
Beyond all change and in the eternal  
distance

To settle on the Truth.

*Edith.* They are not so true,  
They change their mates.

*Harold.* Do they? I did not know  
it.

*Edith.* They say thou art to wed  
the Lady Aldwyth.

*Harold.* They say, they say!

*Edith.* If this be politic,  
And well for thee and England — and  
for her — <sup>70</sup>

Care not for me who love thee.

*Gurth (calling).* Harold, Harold!

*Harold.* The voice of Gurth! (*Enter Gurth.*) Good even, my  
good brother!

*Gurth.* Good even, gentle Edith.

*Edith.* Good even, Gurth.

*Gurth.* Ill news hath come! Our  
hapless brother, Tostig —

He, and the giant King of Norway,  
Harold

Hardrada — Scotland, Ireland, Ice-  
land, Orkney,

Are landed north of Humber, and in a  
field

So packt with carnage that the dykes  
and brooks

Were bridged and damm'd with dead,  
have overthrow'n <sup>79</sup>

Morcar and Edwin.

*Harold.* Well then, we must fight.  
How blows the wind?

*Gurth.* Against Saint Valery  
And William.

*Harold.* Well then, we will to the  
North.

*Gurth.* Ay, but worse news: this  
William sent to Rome,

Swearing thou swarest falsely by his  
Saints.

The Pope and that Archdeacon Hilde-  
brand,

His master, heard him, and have sent  
him back

A holy gonfanon, and a blessed hair  
Of Peter, and all France, all Burgundy,  
Poitou, all Christendom is raised  
against thee.

He hath cursed thee, and all those  
who fight for thee, <sup>90</sup>

And given thy realm of England to  
the bastard.

*Harold.* Ha! ha!

*Edith.* O, laugh not! — Strange and  
ghastly in the gloom

And shadowing of this double thunder-  
cloud

That lours on England — laughter!

*Harold.* No, not strange!  
This was old human laughter in old  
Rome

Before a Pope was born, when that  
which reign'd

Call'd itself God. — A kindly rendering  
Of 'Render unto Cæsar.' — The Good  
Shepherd!

Take this, and render that.

*Gurth.* They have taken York.

*Harold.* The Lord was God and  
came as man — the Pope <sup>100</sup>  
Is man and comes as God. — York  
taken?

*Gurth.* Yea,

Tostig hath taken York!

*Harold.* To York then. Edith,  
Hadst thou been braver, I had better  
braved

All — but I love thee and thou me —  
and that

Remains beyond all chances and all  
churches,

And that thou knowest.

*Edith.* Ay, but take back thy ring.  
It burns my hand—a curse to thee  
and me.  
I dare not wear it.

[*Proffers Harold the ring, which  
he takes.*]

*Harold.* But I dare. God with  
thee!

[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*]

*Edith.* The King hath cursed him,  
if he marry me; <sup>110</sup>  
The Pope hath cursed him, marry me  
or no!  
God help me! I know nothing—can  
but pray  
For Harold—pray, pray, pray—no  
help but prayer,  
A breath that fleets beyond this iron  
world,  
And touches Him that made it.

## ACT IV

### SCENE I.—IN NORTHUMBRIA

ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, MORCAR, EDWIN, and FORCES. *Enter HAROLD, the standard of the golden Dragon of Wessex preceding him.*

*Harold.* What! are thy people sullen  
from defeat?  
Our Wessex dragon flies beyond the  
Humber,  
No voice to greet it.  
*Edwin.* Let not our great King  
Believe us sullen—only shamed to  
the quick  
Before the King—as having been so  
bruised  
By Harold, King of Norway; but our  
help  
Is Harold, King of England. Pardon  
us, thou!  
Our silence is our reverence for the  
King!

*Harold.* Earl of the Mercians! if  
the truth be gall,  
Cram me not thou with honey, when  
our good hive <sup>10</sup>  
Needs every sting to save it.

*Voices.* Aldwyth! Aldwyth!  
*Harold.* Why cry thy people on thy  
sister's name?

*Morcar.* She hath won upon our  
people thro' her beauty  
And pleasantness among them.

*Voices.* Aldwyth, Aldwyth!  
*Harold.* They shout as they would  
have her for a queen.

*Morcar.* She hath follow'd with our  
host, and suffer'd all.

*Harold.* What would ye, men?  
*Voice.* Our old Northumbrian crown,  
And kings of our own choosing.

*Harold.* Your old crown  
Were little help without our Saxon  
carles

Against Hardrada.

*Voice.* Little! we are Danes,  
Who conquer'd what we walk on, our  
own field. <sup>21</sup>

*Harold.* They have been plotting  
here! [*Aside.*]

*Voice.* He calls us little!  
*Harold.* The kingdoms of this world  
began with little,

A hill, a fort, a city—that reach'd a  
hand

Down to the field beneath it, 'Be thou  
mine,'

Then to the next, 'Thou also!' If the  
field

Cried out, 'I am mine own,' another  
hill,

Or fort, or city, took it, and the first  
Fell, and the next became an empire.

*Voice.* Yet  
Thou art but a West Saxon; we are  
Danes! <sup>30</sup>

*Harold.* My mother is a Dane, and  
I am English;

There is a pleasant fable in old books,  
Ye take a stick, and break it; bind a  
score

All in one faggot, snap it over knee,  
Ye cannot.

*Voice.* Hear King Harold! he says  
true!

*Harold.* Would ye be Norsemen?

*Voices.* No!

*Harold.* Or Norman?

*Voices.* No!

*Harold.* Snap not the faggot-band  
then.

*Voice.* That is true!

*Voice.* Ay, but thou art not kingly,  
only grandson

To Wulfnoth, a poor cowerd.

*Harold.* This old Wulfnoth

Would take me on his knees and tell  
me tales <sup>40</sup>  
Of Alfred and of Athelstan the Great  
Who drove you Danes; and yet he  
held that Dane,  
Jute, Angle, Saxon, were or should be  
all  
One England; for this cowerd, like  
my father,  
Who shook the Norman scoundrels off  
the throne,  
Had in him kingly thoughts — a king  
of men,  
Not made but born, like the great King  
of all,  
A light among the oxen.

*Voice.* That is true!

*Voice.* Ay, and I love him now, for  
mine own father <sup>49</sup>

Was great, and cobbled.

*Voice.* Thou art Tostig's brother,  
Who wastes the land.

*Harold.* This brother comes to save  
Your land from waste; I saved it once  
before,

For when your people banish'd Tostig  
hence,

And Edward would have sent a host  
against you,

Then I, who loved my brother, bade  
the King,

Who doted on him, sanction your de-  
cree

Of Tostig's banishment, and choice of  
Morcar,

To help the realm from scattering.

*Voice.* King! thy brother,  
If one may dare to speak the truth,  
was wrong'd.

Wild was he, born so; but the plots  
against him <sup>60</sup>

Had madden'd tamer men.

*Morcar.* Thou art one of those  
Who brake into Lord Tostig's treasure-  
house

And slew two hundred of his follow-  
ing,

And now, when Tostig hath come back  
with power.

Are frightened back to Tostig.

*Old Thane.* Ugh! Plots and feuds!  
This is my ninetieth birthday. Can ye  
not

Be brethren? Godwin still at feud with  
Alfgar,

And Alfgar hates King Harold. Plots  
and feuds!

This is my ninetieth birthday!

*Harold.* Old man, Harold  
Hates nothing; not *his* fault, if our  
two houses <sup>70</sup>

Be less than brothers.

*Voices.* Aldwyth, Harold, Aldwyth!

*Harold.* Again! Morcar! Edwin!

What do they mean?

*Edwin.* So the good King would  
deign to lend an ear

Not overscornful, we might chance  
— perchance —

To guess their meaning.

*Morcar.* Thine own meaning,  
Harold,

To make all England one, to close all  
feuds,

Mixing our bloods, that thence a king  
may rise

Half-Godwin and half-Alfgar, one to  
rule

All England beyond question, beyond  
quarrel.

*Harold.* Who sow'd this fancy here  
among the people? <sup>80</sup>

*Morcar.* Who knows what sows it-  
self among the people?

A goodly flower at times.

*Harold.* The Queen of Wales?  
Why, Morcar, it is all but duty in  
her

To hate me; I have heard she hates  
me.

*Morcar.* No!

For I can swear to that, but cannot  
swear

That these will follow thee against the  
Norsemen,

If thou deny them this.

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin,  
When will ye cease to plot against my  
house?

*Edwin.* The King can scarcely dream  
that we, who know

His prowess in the mountains of the  
West, <sup>90</sup>

Should care to plot against him in the  
North.

*Morcar.* Who dares arraign us, King,  
of such a plot?

*Harold.* Ye heard one witness even  
now.

*Morcar.* The craven!

There is a faction risen again for Tostig,  
Since Tostig came with Norway —  
fright, not love.

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin, will ye,  
if I yield,

Follow against the Norseman ?

*Morcar.* Surely, surely !

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin, will ye  
upon oath 98

Help us against the Norman ?

*Morcar.* With good will ;

Yea, take the sacrament upon it, King.

*Harold.* Where is thy sister ?

*Morcar.* Somewhere hard at hand.

Call and she comes.

[*One goes out, then enter Aldwyth.*]

*Harold.* I doubt not but thou  
knowest

Why thou art summon'd.

*Aldwyth.* Why ? — I stay with these,  
Lest thy fierce Tostig spy me out  
alone,

And flay me all alive.

*Harold.* Canst thou love one  
Who did discrown thine husband, un-  
queen thee ?

Didst thou not love thine husband ?

*Aldwyth.* O ! my lord,  
The nimble, wild, red, wiry, savage  
king —

That was, my lord, a match of policy.

*Harold.* Was it ?  
I knew him brave ; he loved his land ;  
he fain 110

Had made her great ; his finger on her  
harp —

I heard him more than once — had in  
it Wales,

Her floods, her woods, her hills. Had  
I been his,

I had been all Welsh.

*Aldwyth.* O, ay ! — all Welsh — and  
yet

I saw thee drive him up his hills — and  
women

Cling to the conquer'd, if they love,  
the more ;

If not, they cannot hate the conqueror.  
We never — O good Morcar, speak for  
us,

His conqueror conquer'd Aldwyth.

*Harold.* Goodly news !

*Morcar.* Doubt it not thou ! Since  
Griffyth's head was sent 120

To Edward, she hath said it.

*Harold.* I had rather  
She would have loved her husband.

Aldwyth, Aldwyth,  
Canst thou love me, thou knowing  
where I love ?

*Aldwyth.* I can, my lord, for mine  
own sake, for thine,  
For England, for thy poor white dove,  
who flutters

Between thee and the porch, but then  
would find

Her nest within the cloister and be  
still.

*Harold.* Canst thou love one who  
cannot love again ?

*Aldwyth.* Full hope have I that love  
will answer love.

*Harold.* Then in the name of the  
great God, so be it ! 130

Come, Aldred, join our hands before  
the hosts,

That all may see.

[*Aldred joins the hands of Harold  
and Aldwyth, and blesses them.*]

*Voices.* Harold, Harold and Ald-  
wyth !

*Harold.* Set forth our golden  
Dragon, let him flap

The wings that beat down Wales !

Advance our Standard of the Warrior,  
Dark among gems and gold ; and thou,

brave banner,  
Blaze like a night of fatal stars on  
those

Who read their doom and die.

Where lie the Norsemen ? on the Der-  
went ? ay,

At Stamford-Bridge. 140

Morcar, collect thy men ; Edwin, my  
friend —

Thou lingerest. — Gurth, —  
Last night King Edward came to me  
in dreams —

The rosy face and long down-silver-  
ing beard —

He told me I should conquer. —  
I am no woman to put faith in  
dreams.

(*To his army.*)

Last night King Edward came to me in  
dreams,

And told me we should conquer.

*Voices.* Forward ! Forward !  
Harold and Holy Cross !

*Aldwyth.* The day is won !

## SCENE II

A PLAIN. BEFORE THE BATTLE OF  
STAMFORD-BRIDGE.

HAROLD *and his GUARD.*

*Harold.* Who is it comes this way?

*Tostig?* (*Enter TOSTIG with a small force.*) O brother,  
What art thou doing here?

*Tostig.* I am foraging  
For Norway's army.

*Harold.* I could take and slay thee.  
Thou art in arms against us.

*Tostig.* Take and slay me,  
For Edward loved me.

*Harold.* Edward bade me spare  
thee.

*Tostig.* I hate King Edward, for  
he join'd with thee  
To drive me outlaw'd. Take and  
slay me, I say,  
Or I shall count thee fool.

*Harold.* Take thee, or free thee,  
Free thee or slay thee, Norway will  
have war;

No man would strike with Tostig,  
save for Norway. <sup>10</sup>

Thou art nothing in thine England,  
save for Norway,

Who loves not thee, but war. What  
dost thou here,

Trampling thy mother's bosom into  
blood?

*Tostig.* She hath wean'd me from  
it with such bitterness.

I come for mine own earldom, my  
Northumbria;

Thou hast given it to the enemy of  
our house.

*Harold.* Northumbria threw thee  
off, she will not have thee.

Thou hast misused her; and, O crown-  
ing crime!

Hast murder'd thine own guest, the  
son of Orm,  
Gamel, at thine own hearth.

*Tostig.* The slow, fat fool!  
He draw'd and prated so, I smote him  
suddenly; <sup>21</sup>

I knew not what I did. He held with  
Morcar. —

I hate myself for all things that I do.

*Harold.* And Morcar holds with us.  
Come back with him.

Know what thou dost; and we may  
find for thee,

So thou be chasten'd by thy banish-  
ment,

Some easier earldom.

*Tostig.* What for Norway then?  
He looks for land among us, he and  
his.

*Harold.* Seven feet of English land,  
or something more,

Seeing he is a giant.

*Tostig.* That is noble! <sup>30</sup>  
That sounds of Godwin.

*Harold.* Come thou back, and be  
Once more a son of Godwin.

*Tostig* (*turns away*). O brother,  
brother,

O Harold —

*Harold* (*laying his hand on Tostig's  
shoulder*). Nay then, come thou  
back to us!

*Tostig* (*after a pause turning to him*).  
Never shall any man say that I,  
that Tostig

Conjured the mightier Harold from  
his North

To do the battle for me here in Eng-  
land,

Then left him for the meaner! thee! —  
Thou hast no passion for the house of

Godwin —

Thou hast but cared to make thyself  
a king —

Thou hast sold me for a cry. — <sup>40</sup>

Thou gavest thy voice against me in  
the Council —

I hate thee, and despise thee, and defy  
thee.

Farewell for ever.

[*Exit.*]

*Harold.* On to Stamford-Bridge!

## SCENE III

AFTER THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD  
BRIDGE. BANQUET

HAROLD *and* ALDWYTH. GURTH,  
LEOFWIN, MORCAR, EDWIN, *and*  
*other* EARLS *and* THANES.

*Voices.* Hail! Harold! Aldwyth!  
hail, bridegroom and bride!

*Aldwyth* (*talking with Harold*). An-  
swer them thou!

Is this our marriage-banquet? Would  
the wines



Of wedding had been dash'd into the cups  
 Of victory, and our marriage and thy glory  
 Been drunk together! these poor hands but sew,  
 Spin, broider — would that they were man's to have held  
 The battle-axe by thee!

*Harold.* There *was* a moment  
 When, being forced aloof from all my guard,  
 And striking at Hardrada and his madmen, 10  
 I had wish'd for any weapon.

*Aldwyth.* Why art thou sad?

*Harold.* I have lost the boy who play'd at ball with me,  
 With whom I fought another fight than this  
 Of Stamford-Bridge.

*Aldwyth.* Ay! ay! thy victories  
 Over our own poor Wales, when at thy side

He conquer'd with thee.

*Harold.* No — the childish fist  
 That cannot strike again.

*Aldwyth.* Thou art too kindly.  
 Why didst thou let so many Norsemen hence?

Thy fierce forekings had clench'd their pirate hides  
 To the bleak church doors, like kites upon a barn. 20

*Harold.* Is there so great a need to tell thee why?

*Aldwyth.* Yea, am I not thy wife?

*Voices.* Hail, Harold, Aldwyth!  
 Bridegroom and bride!

*Aldwyth.* Answer them!

[*To Harold.*  
*Harold (to all).* Earls and thanes!  
 Full thanks for your fair greeting of my bride!

Earls, thanes, and all our countrymen! the day,  
 Our day beside the Derwent, will not shine  
 Less than a star among the goldenest hours

Of Alfred, or of Edward his great son,  
 Or Athelstan, or English Ironside  
 Who fought with Knut, or Knut who coming Dane 30

Died English. Every man about his King

Fought like a king; the King like his own man,

No better; one for all, and all for one,  
 One soul! and therefore have we shatter'd back

The hugest wave from Norseland ever yet

Surged on us, and our battle-axes broken

The Raven's wing, and dumb'd his carrion croak

From the gray sea for ever. Many are gone —

Drink to the dead who died for us, the living

Who fought and would have died, but happier lived, 40

If happier be to live; they both have life  
 In the large mouth of England, till her voice

Die with the world. Hail — hail!

*Morcar.* May all invaders perish like Hardrada!

All traitors fail like Tostig!

[*All drink but Harold.*

*Aldwyth.* Thy cup's full!

*Harold.* I saw the hand of Tostig cover it.

Our dear, dead traitor-brother, Tostig, him

Reverently we buried. Friends, had I been here,

Without too large self-lauding I must hold

The sequel had been other than his league 50

With Norway, and this battle. Peace be with him!

He was not of the worst. If there be those

At banquet in this hall, and hearing me —

For there be those, I fear, who prick'd the lion

To make him spring, that sight of Danish blood

Might serve an end not English — peace with them

Likewise, if they can be at peace with what

God gave us to divide us from the wolf!

*Aldwyth (aside to Harold).* Make not our Morcar sullen; it is not wise.

*Harold.* Hail to the living who fought, the dead who fell! 60

*Voices.* Hail, hail!



STAMFORD BRIDGE

*First Thane.* How ran that answer  
which King Harold gave  
To his dead namesake, when he ask'd  
for England?

*Leofwin.* 'Seven feet of English  
earth, or something more,  
Seeing he is a giant!'

*First Thane.* Then for the bastard  
Six feet and nothing more!

*Leofwin.* Ay, but belike  
Thou hast not learnt his measure.

*First Thane.* By Saint Edmund  
I over-measure him. Sound sleep to  
the man  
Here by dead Norway without dream  
or dawn!

*Second Thane.* What, is he bragging  
still that he will come, <sup>70</sup>  
To thrust our Harold's throne from  
under him?

My nurse would tell me of a molehill  
crying  
To a mountain, 'Stand aside and room  
for me!'

*First Thane.* Let him come! let him  
come! Here's to him, sink or  
swim! [*Drinks.*]

*Second Thane.* God sink him!

*First Thane.* Cannot hands which  
had the strength  
To shove that stranded iceberg off our  
shores,  
And send the shatter'd North again to  
sea,  
Scuttle his cockle-shell? What's Bru  
nanburg

To Stamford-Bridge? a war-crash, and  
so hard,

So loud, that, by Saint Dunstan, old  
Saint Thor — <sup>80</sup>

By God, we thought him dead — but  
our old Thor

Heard his own thunder again, and  
woke and came

Among us again, and mark'd the sons  
of those

Who made this Britain England, break  
the North —

Mark'd how the war-axe swang,  
 Heard how the war-horn sang,  
 Mark'd how the spear-head sprang,  
 Heard how the shield-wall rang,  
 Iron on iron clang,  
 Anvil on hammer bang — 90

*Second Thane.* Hammer on anvil,  
 hammer on anvil. Old dog,  
 Thou art drunk, old dog !

*First Thane.* Too drunk to fight  
 with thee !

*Second Thane.* Fight thou with thine  
 own double, not with me,  
 Keep that for Norman William !

*First Thane.* Down with William !

*Third Thane.* The washerwoman's  
 brat !

*Fourth Thane.* The tanner's bas-  
 tard !

*Fifth Thane.* The Falaise byblow !

*Enter a THANE, from Pevensey, spat-  
 tered with mud.*

*Harold.* Ay, but what late guest,  
 As haggard as a fast of forty days,  
 And caked and plaster'd with a hun-  
 dred mires,  
 Hath stumbled on our cups ?

*Thane from Pevensey.* My lord the  
 King !

William the Norman, for the wind had  
 changed — 100

*Harold.* I felt it in the middle of  
 that fierce fight

At Stamford-Bridge. William hath  
 landed, ha ?

*Thane from Pevensey.* Landed at  
 Pevensey — I am from Peven-  
 sey —

Hath wasted all the land at Pevensey —  
 Hath harried mine own cattle — God  
 confound him !

I have ridden night and day from  
 Pevensey —

A thousand ships — a hundred thou-  
 sand men —

Thousands of horses, like as many lions  
 Neighing and roaring as they leapt to  
 land —

*Harold.* How oft in coming hast  
 thou broken bread ? 110

*Thane from Pevensey.* Some thrice,  
 or so.

*Harold.* Bring not thy hollowness  
 On our full feast. Famine is fear,  
 were it but

Of being starved. Sit down, sit down,  
 and eat,

And, when again red-blooded, speak  
 again.

(*Aside.*) The men that guarded Eng-  
 land to the South

Were scatter'd to the harvest. — No  
 power mine

To hold their force together. — Many  
 are fallen

At Stamford-Bridge — the people  
 stupid-sure

Sleep like their swine — in South and  
 North at once

I could not be.

(*Aloud.*) Gurth, Leofwin, Morcar,  
 Edwin ! 120

(*Pointing to the revellers.*) The curse  
 of England ! these are drown'd  
 in wassail,

And cannot see the world but thro'  
 their wines !

Leave them ! and thee too, Aldwyth,  
 must I leave —

Harsh is the news ! hard is our honey-  
 moon !

Thy pardon (*Turning round to his at-  
 tendants.*) Break the banquet  
 up — Ye four !

And thou, my carrier-pigeon of black  
 news,

Cram thy crop full, but come when  
 thou art call'd. [*Exit Harold.*]

## ACT V

SCENE I. A TENT ON A MOUND  
 FROM WHICH CAN BE SEEN THE  
 FIELD OF SENLAC

HAROLD, *sitting*; by him standing  
 HUGH MARGOT the Monk, GURTH,  
 LEOFWIN.

*Harold.* Refer my cause, my crown  
 to Rome ! The wolf  
 Mudded the brook and predetermined  
 all.

Monk,

Thou hast said thy say, and had my  
 constant 'No'

For all but instant battle. I hear no  
 more.

*Margot.* Hear me again — for the  
 last time. Arise,

Scatter thy people home, descend the hill,

Lay hands of full allegiance in thy Lord's

And crave his mercy, for the Holy Father

Hath given this realm of England to the Norman. <sup>10</sup>

*Harold.* Then for the last time, monk, I ask again

When had the Lateran and the Holy Father

To do with England's choice of her own king?

*Margot.* Earl, the first Christian Cæsar drew to the East

To leave the Pope dominion in the West.

He gave him all the kingdoms of the West.

*Harold.* So!—did he?—Earl—I have a mind to play

The William with thine eyesight and thy tongue.

Earl—ay—thou art but a messenger of William.

I am weary—go; make me not wroth with thee! <sup>20</sup>

*Margot.* Mock-king, I am the messenger of God,

His Norman Daniel! Mene, Mene, Tekel!

Is thy wrath hell, that I should spare to cry,

Yon Heaven is wroth with thee? Hear me again!

Our Saints have moved the Church that moves the world,

And all the Heavens and very God; they heard—

They know King Edward's promise and thine—thine.

*Harold.* Should they not know free England crowns herself?

Not know that he nor I had power to promise?

Not know that Edward cancell'd his own promise? <sup>30</sup>

And for my part therein—Back to that juggler, [*Rising.*]

Tell him the Saints are nobler than he dreams,

Tell him that God is nobler than the Saints,

And tell him we stand arm'd on Senlac Hill,

And bide the doom of God.

*Margot.* Hear it thro' me.

The realm for which thou art forsworn is cursed,

The babe enwomb'd and at the breast is cursed,

The corpse thou whelmeest with thine earth is cursed,

The soul who fighteth on thy side is cursed,

The seed thou sowest in thy field is cursed, <sup>40</sup>

The steer wherewith thou plowest thy field is cursed,

The fowl that fleeth o'er thy field is cursed,

And thou, usurper, liar—

*Harold.* Out, beast monk!

[*Lifting his hand to strike him.*]

*Gurth stops the blow.*

I ever hated monks.

*Margot.* I am but a voice Among you; murder, martyr me if ye will—

*Harold.* Thanks, Gurth! The simple, silent, selfless man

Is worth a world of tonguesters. (*To Margot.*) Get thee gone!

He means the thing he says. See him out safe!

*Leofwin.* He hath blown himself as red as fire with curses.

An honest fool! Follow me, honest fool, <sup>50</sup>

But if thou blurt thy curse among our folk,

I know not—I may give that egg-bald head

The tap that silences.

*Harold.* See him out safe. [*Exeunt Leofwin and Margot.*]

*Gurth.* Thou hast lost thine even temper, brother Harold!

*Harold.* Gurth, when I past by Waltham, my foundation

For men who serve the neighbor, not themselves,

I cast me down prone, praying; and, when I rose,

They told me that the Holy Rood had lean'd

And bow'd above me; whether that which held it

Had weaken'd, and the Rood itself were bound <sup>60</sup>

To that necessity which binds us  
down;  
Whether it bow'd at all but in their  
fancy;  
Or if it bow'd, whether it symbol'd  
ruin  
Or glory, who shall tell? but they  
were sad,  
And somewhat sadden'd me.

*Gurth.* Yet if a fear,  
Or shadow of a fear, lest the strange  
Saints  
By whom thou swarest should have  
power to balk  
Thy puissance in this fight with him  
who made  
And heard thee swear—brother—I  
have not sworn—

If the King fall, may not the kingdom  
fall? <sup>70</sup>

But if I fall, I fall, and thou art King;  
And if I win, I win, and thou art  
King;

Draw thou to London, there make  
strength to breast

Whatever chance, but leave this day  
to me.

*Leofwin (entering).* And waste the  
land about thee as thou goest,  
And be thy hand as winter on the field,  
To leave the foe no forage.

*Harold.* Noble Gurth!  
Best son of Godwin! If I fall, I fall—  
The doom of God! How should the  
people fight

When the King flies? And, Leofwin,  
art thou mad? <sup>80</sup>

How should the King of England  
waste the fields

Of England, his own people?—No  
glance yet

Of the Northumbrian helmet on the  
heath?

*Leofwin.* No, but a shoal of wives  
upon the heath,

And some one saw thy willy-nilly nun  
Vying a tress against our golden fern.

*Harold.* Vying a tear with our cold  
dews, a sigh

With these low-moaning heavens.  
Let her be fetch'd.

We have parted from our wife with-  
out reproach,

Tho' we have pierced thro' all her  
practices; <sup>90</sup>

And that is well.

*Leofwin.* I saw her even now;  
She hath not left us.

*Harold.* Nought of Morcar then?  
*Gurth.* Nor seen, nor heard; thine,

William's, or his own  
As wind blows, or tide flows. Belike  
he watches

If this war-storm in one of its rough  
rolls

Wash up that old crown of Northum-  
berland.

*Harold.* I married her for Morcar  
—a sin against

The truth of love. Evil for good, it  
seems,

Is oft as childless of the good as  
evil

For evil.

*Leofwin.* Good for good hath borne  
at times <sup>100</sup>

A bastard false as William.

*Harold.* Ay, if Wisdom  
Pair'd not with Good. But I am

somewhat worn,  
A snatch of sleep were like the peace

of God,  
Gurth, Leofwin, go once more about

the hill—  
What did the dead man call it—

Sanguelac,  
The lake of blood?

*Leofwin.* A lake that dips in Wil-  
liam

As well as Harold.

*Harold.* Like enough. I have  
seen

The trenches dug, the palisades up-  
rear'd

And wattled thick with ash and wil-  
low-wands,

Yea, wrought at them myself. Go  
round once more; <sup>110</sup>

See all be sound and whole. No Nor-  
man horse

Can shatter England, standing shield  
by shield;

Tell that again to all.

*Gurth.* I will, good brother.

*Harold.* Our guardsman hath but  
toil'd his hand and foot,

I hand, foot, heart and head. Some  
wine!

(*One pours wine into a goblet which  
he hands to Harold.*) Too much!

What? we must use our battle-axe to  
day;

Our guardsman have slept well, since  
we came in?

*Leofwin.* Ay, slept and snored.

Your second-sighted man  
That scared the dying conscience of  
the king

Misheard their snores for groans.

They are up again <sup>120</sup>

And chanting that old song of Brun-  
naburg

Where England conquer'd.

*Harold.* That is well. The Nor-  
man,

What is he doing?

*Leofwin.* Praying for Normandy;  
Our scouts have heard the tinkle of  
their bells.

*Harold.* And our old songs are  
prayers for England too!

But by all Saints —

*Leofwin.* Barring the Norman!

*Harold.* Nay,

Were the great trumpet blowing  
doomsday dawn,

I needs must rest. Call when the  
Norman moves —

[*Exeunt all but Harold.*

No horse — thousands of horses — our  
shield wall —

Wall — break it not — break not —  
break — [*Sleeps.*

*Vision of Edward.* Son Harold, I  
thy king, who came before <sup>131</sup>

To tell thee thou shouldst win at Stam-  
ford Bridge,

Come yet once more, from where I am  
at peace,

Because I loved thee in my mortal  
day,

To tell thee thou shalt die on Senlac  
Hill —

Sanguelac!

*Vision of Wulfnoth.* O brother,  
from my ghastly oubliette

I send my voice across the narrow  
seas —

No more, no more, dear brother, never-  
more —

Sanguelac! <sup>140</sup>

*Vision of Tostig.* O brother, most  
unbrotherlike to me,

Thou gavest thy voice against me in  
my life,

I give my voice against thee from the  
grave —

Sanguelac!

*Vision of Norman Saints.* O hap-  
less Harold! King but for an  
hour!

Thou swearst falsely by our blessed  
bones,

We give our voice against thee out of  
heaven!

Sanguelac! Sanguelac! The arrow!  
the arrow!

*Harold (starting up, battle-axe in  
hand).* Away!

My battle-axe against your voices.  
Peace!

The King's last word — 'the arrow!'  
I shall die — <sup>150</sup>

I die for England then, who lived for  
England —

What nobler? men must die.

I cannot fall into a falsar world —

I have done no man wrong. Tostig,  
poor brother,

Art thou so anger'd?

Fain had I kept thine earldom in thy  
hands

Save for thy wild and violent will that  
wrench'd

All hearts of freemen from thee. I  
could do

No other than this way advise the  
king

Against the race of Godwin. Is it  
possible <sup>160</sup>

That mortal men should bear their  
earthly heats

Into yon bloodless world, and threaten  
us thence

Unschool'd of Death? Thus then thou  
art revenged —

I left our England naked to the South  
To meet thee in the North. The Norse-  
man's raid

Hath helpt the Norman, and the race  
of Godwin

Hath ruin'd Godwin! No — our wak-  
ing thoughts

Suffer a stormless shipwreck in the  
pools

Of sullen slumber, and arise again

Disjointed; only dreams — where  
mine own self <sup>170</sup>

Takes part against myself! Why? for  
a spark

Of self-disdain born in me when I  
sware

Falsely to him, the falsar Norman  
over

His gilded ark of mummy-saints, by whom  
I knew not that I swear, — not for myself —  
For England — yet not wholly —

*Enter EDITH.*

Edith, Edith,  
Get thou into thy cloister as the King  
Will'd it; be safe, the perjury-mongering Count  
Hath made too good an use of Holy Church  
To break her close! There the great God of truth<sup>180</sup>  
Fill all thine hours with peace! — A lying devil  
Hath haunted me — mine oath — my wife — I fain  
Had made my marriage not a lie; I could not.  
Thou art my bride! and thou in after years  
Praying perchance for this poor soul of mine  
In cold, white cells beneath an icy moon —  
This memory to thee! — and this to England,  
My legacy of war against the Pope  
From child to child, from Pope to Pope, from age to age,  
Till the sea wash her level with her shores,<sup>190</sup>  
Or till the Pope be Christ's.

*Enter ALDWYTH.*

*Aldwyth (to Edith).* Away from him!

*Edith.* I will. — I have not spoken to the king  
One word; and one I must. Farewell!

*[Going.]*  
*Harold.* Not yet.

Stay.

*Edith.* To what use?

*Harold.* The King commands thee, woman!

*(To ALDWYTH.)*

Have thy two brethren sent their forces in?

*Aldwyth.* Nay, I fear not.

*Harold.* Then there's no force in thee!

Thou didst possess thyself of Edward's ear

To part me from the woman that I loved!

Thou didst arouse the fierce Northumbrians!

Thou hast been false to England and to me!

As — in some sort — I have been false to thee.<sup>200</sup>

Leave me. No more — Pardon on both sides — Go!

*Aldwyth.* Alas, my lord, I loved thee.

*Harold (bitterly).* With a love

Passing thy love for Griffyth! wherefore now

Obey my first and last commandment. Go!

*Aldwyth.* O Harold! husband! Shall we meet again?

*Harold.* After the battle — after the battle. Go.

*Aldwyth.* I go. *(Aside.)* That I could stab her standing there!

*[Exit Aldwyth.]*

*Edith.* Alas, my lord, she loved thee.

*Harold.* Never! never!

*Edith.* I saw it in her eyes!

*Harold.* I see it in thine.

And not on thee — nor England — fall God's doom!<sup>211</sup>

*Edith.* On thee? on me! And thou art England! Alfred

Was England. Ethelred was nothing. England

Is but her king, and thou art Harold!

*Harold.* Edith,

The sign in heaven — the sudden blast at sea —

My fatal oath — the dead Saints — the dark dreams —

The Pope's anathema — the Holy Rood That bow'd to me at Waltham — Edith, if

I, the last English King of England —

*Edith.* No,

First of a line that coming from the people,<sup>220</sup>

And chosen by the people —

*Harold.* And fighting for

And dying for the people —

*Edith.* Living! living!

*Harold.* Yea so, good cheer! thou art Harold, I am Edith!

Look not thus wan!

*Edith.* What matters how I look?

Have we not broken Wales and Norseland? slain,

Whose life was all one battle, incarnate war,

Their giant-king, a mightier man-in-arms  
Than William.

*Harold.* Ay, my girl, no tricks in him—

No bastard he! when all was lost, he yell'd,

And bit his shield, and dash'd it on the ground, <sup>230</sup>

And swaying his two-handed sword about him,

Two deaths at every swing, ran in upon us

And died so, and I loved him as I hate This liar who made me liar. If Hate

can kill,

And Loathing wield a Saxon battle-axe—

*Edith.* Waste not thy might before the battle!

*Harold.* No,

And thou must hence. Stigand will see thee safe,

And so—Farewell.

[*He is going, but turns back.*]

The ring thou dardest not wear, I have had it fashion'd, see, to meet my hand.

[*Harold shows the ring which is on his finger.*]

Farewell! <sup>240</sup>

[*He is going, but turns back again.*]

I am dead as Death this day to aught of earth's

Save William's death or mine.

*Edith.* Thy death!—to-day! Is it not thy birthday?

*Harold.* Ay, that happy day! A birthday welcome! happy days and many!

One—this! [*They embrace.*]

Look, I will bear thy blessing into the battle

And front the doom of God.

*Norman Cries (heard in the distance).*

Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Enter GURTH.*

*Gurth.* The Norman moves!

*Harold.* Harold and Holy Cross!

[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*]

*Enter STIGAND.*

*Stigand.* Our Church in arms—the lamb the lion—not

Spear into pruning-hook—the counter way— <sup>250</sup>

Cowl, helm; and crozier, battle-axe.

Abbot Alfwig,

Leofric, and all the monks of Peter-boro'

Strike for the king; but I, old wretch, old Stigand,

With hands too limp to brandish iron— and yet

I have a power—would Harold ask me for it

I have a power.

*Edith.* What power, holy father?

*Stigand.* Power now from Harold to command thee hence

And see thee safe from Senlac.

*Edith.* I remain!

*Stigand.* Yea, so will I, daughter, until I find

Which way the battle balance. I can see it <sup>260</sup>

From where we stand; and, live or die, I would

I were among them!

CANONS from Waltham (*singing without*).

Salva patriam,

Sancte Pater,

Salva, Fili,

Salva, Spiritus,

Salva patriam,

Sancta Mater. <sup>1</sup>

*Edith.* Are those the blessed angels quiring, father?

*Stigand.* No, daughter, but the canons out of Waltham, <sup>270</sup>

The king's foundation, that have follow'd him.

*Edith.* O God of battles, make their wall of shields

Firm as thy cliffs, strengthen their palisades!

What is that whirring sound?

*Stigand.* The Norman arrow!

*Edith.* Look out upon the battle—is he safe?

*Stigand.* The King of England stands between his banners.

He glitters on the crowning of the hill.

God save King Harold!

*Edith.*—chosen by his people

And fighting for his people!

*Stigand.* There is one

<sup>1</sup> The *a* throughout these Latin hymns should be sounded broad, as in 'father.'



Come as Goliath came of yore—he  
flings 280

His brand in air and catches it again,  
He is chanting some old war-song.

*Edith.* And no David  
To meet him?

*Stigand.* Ay, there springs a Saxon  
on him,

Falls—and another falls.

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

*Stigand.* Lo! our good Gurth hath  
smitten him to the death.

*Edith.* So perish all the enemies of  
Harold!

CANONS (*singing*).

Hostis in Angliam  
Ruit prædator;  
Illorum, Domine,  
Scutum scindatur!  
Hostis per Angliæ 290  
Plagas bacchatur;  
Casa crematur,  
Pastor fugatur,  
Grex trucidatur—

*Stigand.* Illos truida, Domine.

*Edith.* Ay, good father.

CANONS (*singing*).

Illorum scelera  
Pœna sequatur!

*English Cries.* Harold and Holy  
Cross! Out! out!

*Stigand.* Our javelins  
Answer their arrows. All the Nor-  
man foot 300  
Are storming up the hill. The range  
of knights

Sit, each a statue on his horse, and  
wait.

*English Cries.* Harold and God Al-  
mighty!

*Norman Cries.* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

CANONS (*singing*).

Eques cum pedite  
Præpediatur!  
Illorum in lacrymas  
Cruor fundatur!  
Pereant, pereant,  
Anglia precatur.

*Stigand.* Look, daughter, look.

*Edith.* Nay, father, look for me!

*Stigand.* Our axes lighten with a  
single flash 311  
About the summit of the hill, and  
heads

And arms are sliver'd off and splin-  
ter'd by

Their lightning—and they fly—the  
Norman flies.

*Edith.* Stigand, O father, have we  
won the day?

*Stigand.* No, daughter, no—they  
fall behind the horse—

Their horse are thronging to the bar-  
ricades;

I see the gonfanon of Holy Peter  
Floating above their helmets—ha! he  
is down!

*Edith.* He down! Who down?

*Stigand.* The Norman Count is  
down. 320

*Edith.* So perish all the enemies of  
England!

*Stigand.* No, no, he hath risen  
again—he bares his face—

Shouts something—he points onward  
—all their horse

Swallow the hill locust-like, swarming  
up.

*Edith.* O God of battles, make his  
battle-axe keen

As thine own sharp-dividing justice,  
heavy

As thine own bolts that fall on crime-  
ful heads

Charged with the weight of heaven  
wherefrom they fall!

CANONS (*singing*).

Jacta tonitrua,  
Deus bellator!  
Surgas e tenebris, 330  
Sis vindicator!  
Fulmina, fulmina,  
Deus vastator!

*Edith.* O God of battles, they are  
three to one,

Make thou one man as three to roll  
them down!

CANONS (*singing*).

Eques cum equite  
Dejiciatur!  
Acies, acies  
Prona sternatur!  
Illorum lanceas 340  
Frangere, Creator!

*Stigand.* Yea, yea, for how their  
lances snap and shiver  
Against the shifting blaze of Harold's  
axe!

War-woodman of old Woden, how he  
fells  
The mortal copse of faces ! There !  
And there !  
The horse and horseman cannot meet  
the shield,  
The blow that brains the horseman  
cleaves the horse,  
The horse and horseman roll along the  
hill,  
They fly once more, they fly, the Nor-  
man flies ! 350

*Equus cum equite  
Præcipitatur.*

*Edith.* O God, the God of truth  
hath heard my cry !  
Follow them, follow them, drive them  
to the sea !

*Illorum scelera  
Pœna sequatur !*

*Stigand.* Truth ! no ; a lie ; a trick,  
a Norman trick !  
They turn on the pursuer, horse  
against foot,  
They murder all that follow.

*Edith.* Have mercy on us !

*Stigand.* Hot-headed fools—to  
burst the wall of shields ! 360  
They have broken the commandment  
of the king !

*Edith.* His oath was broken—O  
holy Norman Saints,  
Ye that are now of heaven, and see  
beyond

Your Norman shrines, pardon it, par-  
don it,  
That he forswore himself for all he  
loved,

Me, me and all ! Look out upon the  
battle !

*Stigand.* They thunder again upon  
the barricades.

My sight is eagle, but the strife so  
thick—

This is the hottest of it ; hold, ash !  
hold, willow !

*English Cries.* Out, out !

*Norman Cries.* Ha Rou !

*Stigand.* Ha ! Gurth had leapt  
upon him 370

And slain him ; he hath fallen.

*Edith.* And I am heard.  
Glory to God in the Highest ! fallen,  
fallen !

*Stigand.* No, no, his horse—he  
mounts another—wields  
His war-club, dashes it on Gurth, and  
Gurth,

Our noble Gurth, is down !

*Edith.* Have mercy on us !

*Stigand.* And Leofwin is down !

*Edith.* Have mercy on us !

O Thou that knowest, let not my  
strong prayer

Be weaken'd in thy sight, because I  
love

The husband of another !

*Norman Cries.* Ha Rou ! Ha Rou !

*Edith.* I do not hear our English  
war-cry.

*Stigand.* No. 380

*Edith.* Look out upon the battle—  
is he safe ?

*Stigand.* He stands between the  
banners with the dead

So piled about him he can hardly move.  
*Edith (takes up the war-cry).* Out !

*Norman Cries.* Ha Rou !

*Edith (cries out).* Harold and Holy  
Cross !

*Norman Cries.* Ha Rou ! Ha Rou !

*Edith.* What is that whirring  
sound ?

*Stigand.* The Norman sends his  
arrows up to heaven,

They fall on those within the palisade !

*Edith.* Look out upon the hill—  
is Harold there ?

*Stigand.* Sanguelac—Sanguelac—  
the arrow—the arrow!—away !

## SCENE II

## FIELD OF THE DEAD. NIGHT

## ALDWYTH and EDITH.

*Aldwyth.* O Edith, art thou here ?  
O Harold, Harold—

Our Harold—we shall never see him  
more.

*Edith.* For there was more than  
sister in my kiss,

And so the Saints were wroth. I can-  
not love them,

For they are Norman Saints—and  
yet I should—

They are so much holier than their  
harlot's son

With whom they play'd their game  
against the King!

*Aldwyth.* The King is slain, the  
kingdom overthrown!

*Edith.* No matter!

*Aldwyth.* How no matter, Harold  
slain?—

I cannot find his body. O, help me  
thou!

O Edith, if I ever wrought against  
thee,

Forgive me thou, and help me here!

*Edith.* No matter!

*Aldwyth.* Not help me, nor forgive  
me?

*Edith.* So thou saidest.

*Aldwyth.* I say it now, forgive me!

*Edith.* Cross me not!

I am seeking one who wedded me in  
secret.

Whisper! God's angels only know it.

Ha!

What art *thou* doing here among the  
dead?

They are stripping the dead bodies  
naked yonder,

And thou art come to rob them of  
their rings!

*Aldwyth.* O Edith, Edith, I have  
lost both crown

And husband.

*Edith.* So have I.

*Aldwyth.* I tell thee, girl,  
I am seeking my dead Harold.

*Edith.* And I mine!

The Holy Father strangled him with  
a hair

Of Peter, and his brother Tostig  
helped;

The wicked sister clapt her hands and  
laugh'd;

Then all the dead fell on him.

*Aldwyth.* Edith, Edith—

*Edith.* What was he like, this hus-  
band? like to thee?

Call not for help from me. I knew  
him not.

He lies not here; not close beside the  
standard.

Here fell the truest, manliest hearts  
of England.

Go further hence and find him.

*Aldwyth.* She is crazed!

*Edith.* That doth not matter either:  
Lower the light.

He must be here.

*Enter two CANONS, OSGOD and ATHEL-  
RIC, with torches. They turn over the  
dead bodies and examine them as they  
pass.*

*Osgod.* I think that this is Thur-  
kill.

*Athelric.* More likely Godric.

*Osgod.* I am sure this body  
is Alfwig, the king's uncle.

*Athelric.* So it is!

No, no,—brave Gurth, one gash from  
brow to knee!

*Osgod.* And here is Leofwin.

*Edith.* And here is *he*!

*Aldwyth.* Harold? O, no—nay, if  
it were—my God,

They have so maim'd and murder'd  
all his face

There is no man can swear to him!

*Edith.* But one woman!

Look you, we never mean to part  
again.

I have found him, I am happy.

Was there not some one ask'd me for  
forgiveness?

I yield it freely, being the true wife  
Of this dead King, who never bore  
revenge.

*Enter COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM  
MALET.*

*William.* Who be these women.

And what body is this?

*Edith.* Harold, thy better!

*William.* Ay, and what art thou?

*Edith.* His wife!

*Malet.* Not true, my girl, here is  
the Queen!

[*Pointing out Aldwyth.*

*William (to Aldwyth).* Wast thou  
his Queen?

*Aldwyth.* I was the Queen of Wales.

*William.* Why, then of England.

Madam, fear us not.

(*To Malet.*) Knowest thou this  
other?

*Malet.* When I visited England,  
Some held she was his wife in secret  
—some—

Well—some believed she was his  
paramour.

*Edith.* Norman, thou liest! liars all  
of you,

Your Saints and all! I am his wife!  
and she—

For look, our marriage ring!

[*She draws it off the finger of Harold.*



BATTLE ABBEY

I lost it somehow —  
I lost it, playing with it when I was  
wild.

*That* bred the doubt! but I am wiser  
now —

I am too wise — Will none among you  
all

Bear me true witness — only for this  
once — 60

That I have found it here again?

*[She put. it on.*

And thou,

Thy wife am I for ever and evermore.

*[Falls on the body and dies.*

*William.* Death! — and enough of  
death for this one day,

The day of Saint Calixtus, and the  
day,

My day when I was born.

*Malet.* And this dead King's,  
Who, king or not, hath kinglike  
fought and fallen,

His birthday, too. It seems but yes-  
ter-even

I held it with him in his English  
halls,

His day, with all his roof-tree ringing  
'Harold,'

Before he fell into the snare of Guy;  
When all men counted Harold would  
be King, 71

And Harold was most happy.

*William.* Thou art half English.

Take them away!

Malet, I vow to build a church to  
God

Here on the hill of battle; let our  
high altar

Stand where their standard fell —  
where these two lie.

Take them away, I do not love to see  
them.

Pluck the dead woman off the dead  
man, Malet!

*Malet.* Faster than ivy! Must I  
hack her arms off?

How shall I part them?

*William.* Leave them. Let them  
be! 80

Bury him and his paramour together.  
He that was false in oath to me, it  
seems

Was false to his own wife. We will  
 not give him  
 A Christian burial; yet he was a war-  
 rior,  
 And wise, yea truthful, till that  
 blighted vow  
 Which God avenged to-day.  
 Wrap them together in a purple cloak,  
 And lay them both upon the waste  
 sea-shore  
 At Hastings, there to guard the land  
 for which  
 He did forswear himself—a warrior  
 —ay, <sup>90</sup>  
 And but that Holy Peter fought for  
 us,  
 And that the false Northumbrian held  
 aloof,  
 And save for that chance arrow which  
 the Saints  
 Sharpen'd and sent against him—  
 who can tell?—  
 Three horses had I slain beneath me;  
 twice  
 I thought that all was lost. Since I  
 knew battle,  
 And that was from my boyhood,  
 never yet—

No, by the splendor of God—have I  
 fought men  
 Like Harold and his brethren, and his  
 guard  
 Of English. Every man about his  
 king <sup>100</sup>  
 Fell where he stood. They loved  
 him; and pray God  
 My Normans may but move as true  
 with me  
 To the door of death! Of one self-  
 stock at first,  
 Make them again one people—Nor-  
 man, English,  
 And English, Norman; we should  
 have a hand  
 To grasp the world with, and a foot  
 to stamp it—  
 Flat. Praise the Saints! It is over.  
 No more blood!  
 I am King of England, so they thwart  
 me not,  
 And I will rule according to their  
 laws.  
 (To Aldwyth.) Madam, we will en-  
 treat thee with all honor. <sup>110</sup>  
*Aldwyth.* My punishment is more  
 than I can bear.



LORD SELBORNE (ROUNDELL PALMER)

## BECKET

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR,

THE RIGHT HONORABLE EARL OF SELBORNE.

MY DEAR SELBORNE, — To you, the honored Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor ; — which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless — for so you have assured me — won your approbation. Ever yours, TENNYSON.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HENRY II. (*son of the Earl of Anjou*).

THOMAS BECKET, *Chancellor of England, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.*

GILBERT FOLIOT, *Bishop of London.*

ROGER, *Archbishop of York.*  
*Bishop of Hereford.*

HILARY, *Bishop of Chichester.*

JOCELYN, *Bishop of Salisbury.*

JOHN OF SALISBURY

HERBERT OF BOSHAM } *friends of Becket.*

WALTER MAP, *reputed author of 'Goliath,' Latin poems against the priesthood.*

KING LOUIS OF FRANCE.

GEOFFREY, *son of Rosamund and Henry.*

GRIM, *a monk of Cambridge.*

SIR REGINALD FITZURSE

SIR RICHARD DE BRITO

SIR WILLIAM DE TRACY

SIR HUGH DE MORVILLE

DE BROC OF SALTWOOD CASTLE.

LORD LEICESTER.

PHILIP DE FLEEMOSYNA.

TWO KNIGHT TEMPLARS.

JOHN OF OXFORD (*called the Swearer*).

ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE, *Queen of England (divorced from Louis of France).*

ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD.

MARGERY.

*the four knights of the king's household, enemies of Becket.*

Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.

## BECKET

### PROLOGUE

A CASTLE IN NORMANDY. INTERIOR  
OF THE HALL. ROOFS OF A CITY  
SEEN THRO' WINDOWS

HENRY and BECKET at chess.

Henry. So then our good Archbishop  
Theobald

Lies dying.

Becket. I am grieved to know as  
much.

Henry. But we must have a mightier  
man than he

For his successor.

Becket. Have you thought of one ?

Henry. A cleric lately poison'd his  
own mother,

And being brought before the courts  
of the Church,

They but degraded him. I hope they  
whipt him.

I would have hang'd him.

Becket. It is your move.

Henry. Well — there. [*Moves.*  
The Church in the pell-mell of Ste-

phen's time

Hath climb'd the throne and almost  
clutch'd the crown ;

But by the royal customs of our realm  
The Church should hold her baronies

of me,  
Like other lords amenable to law.

I'll have them written down and made  
the law.

Becket. My liege, I move my bishop.

Henry. And if I live,

No man without my leave shall ex-  
communicate

My tenants or my household.

Becket. Look to your king.

Henry. No man without my leave  
shall cross the seas

To set the Pope against me — I pray  
your pardon.

Becket. Well — will you move ?

Henry. There. [*Moves.*

Becket. Check — you move so wildly.

Henry. There then ! [*Moves.*

Becket. Why — there then, for you  
see my bishop

Hath brought your king to a standstill.  
You are beaten.

Henry (*kicks over the board*). Why,  
there then — down go bishop  
and king together.

I loathe being beaten ; had I fixt my  
fancy

Upon the game I should have beaten  
thee,

But that was vagabond.

Becket. Where, my liege ? With  
Phryne,

Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or an-  
other ?

Henry. My Rosamund is no Lais,  
Thomas Becket ;

And yet she plagues me too — no fault  
in her —

But that I fear the Queen would have  
her life. 30

*Becket.* Put her away, put her away,  
my liege!

Put her away into a nunnery!

Safe enough there from her to whom  
thou art bound

By Holy Church. And wherefore  
should she seek

The life of Rosamund de Clifford more  
Than that of other paramours of  
thine?

*Henry.* How dost thou know I am  
not wedded to her?

*Becket.* How should I know?

*Henry.* That is my secret, Thomas.

*Becket.* State secrets should be pa-  
tent to the statesman

Who serves and loves his king, and  
whom the king 40

Loves not as statesman, but true lover  
and friend.

*Henry.* Come, come, thou art but  
deacon, not yet bishop,

No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor  
yet.

I would to God thou wert, for I should  
find

An easy father confessor in thee.

*Becket.* Saint Denis, that thou  
shouldst not. I should beat

Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten  
it.

*Henry.* Hell take thy bishop then,  
and my kingship too!

Come, come, I love thee and I know  
thee, I know thee,

A doter on white pheasant-flesh at  
feasts, 50

A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,  
A dish-designer, and most amorous

Of good old red sound liberal Gascon  
wine.

Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou  
flatter it?

*Becket.* That palate is insane which  
cannot tell

A good dish from a bad, new wine  
from old.

*Henry.* Well, who loves wine loves  
woman.

*Becket.* So I do.

Men are God's trees, and women are  
God's flowers;

And when the Gascon wine mounts to  
my head,

The trees are all the statelier, and the  
flowers 60

Are all the fairer.

*Henry.* And thy thoughts, thy fan-  
cies?

*Becket.* Good dogs, my liege, well  
train'd, and easily call'd

Off from the game.

*Henry.* Save for some once or twice,  
When they ran down the game and  
worried it.

*Becket.* No, my liege, no! — not once  
— in God's name, no!

*Henry.* Nay, then, I take thee at  
thy word — believe thee

The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's  
hall.

And so this Rosamund, my true heart-  
wife,

Not Eleanor — she whom I love in-  
deed

As a woman should be loved — Why  
dost thou smile 70

So dolorously?

*Becket.* My good liege, if a man  
Wastes himself among women, how  
should he love

A woman as a woman should be loved?

*Henry.* How shouldst thou know  
that never hast loved one?

Come, I would give her to thy care in  
England

When I am out in Normandy or Anjou.

*Becket.* My lord, I am your sub-  
ject, not your —

*Henry.* Pander.

God's eyes! I know all that — not  
my purveyor

Of pleasures, but to save a life — her  
life;

Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hell-  
fire. 80

I have built a secret bower in Eng-  
land, Thomas,

A nest in a bush.

*Becket.* And where, my liege?

*Henry (whispers).* Thine ear.

*Becket.* That's lone enough.

*Henry (laying paper on table).* This  
chart here mark'd '*Her Bower*,'

Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a  
circling wood,

A hundred pathways running every-  
way,

And then a brook, a bridge; and after  
that



This labyrinthine brickwork maze in  
 maze,  
 And then another wood, and in the  
 midst  
 A garden and my Rosamund. Look,  
 this line—  
 The rest you see is color'd green—  
 but this 90

Draws thro' the chart to her.  
*Becket.* This blood-red line?

*Henry.* Ay! blood, perchance, except thou see to her.

*Becket.* And where is she? There in her English nest?

*Henry.* Would God she were!—no, here within the city.

We take her from her secret bower in Anjou

And pass her to her secret bower in England.

She is ignorant of all but that I love her.

*Becket.* My liege, I pray thee let me hence; a widow

And orphan child, whom one of thy wild barons—

*Henry.* Ay, ay, but swear to see to her in England. 100

*Becket.* Well, well, I swear, but not to please myself.

*Henry.* Whatever come between us?

*Becket.* What should come Between us, Henry?

*Henry.* Nay—I know not, Thomas.

*Becket.* What need then? Well—whatever come between us.

[*Going.*]

*Henry.* A moment! thou didst help me to my throne

In Theobald's time, and after by thy wisdom

Hast kept it firm from shaking; but now I,

For my realm's sake, myself must be the wizard

To raise that tempest which will set it trembling

Only to base it deeper. I, true son 110

Of Holy Church—no croucher to the

Gregories

That tread the kings their children under-heel—

Must curb her; and the Holy Father, while

This Barbarossa butts him from his chair,

Will need my help—be facile to my hands.

Now is my time. Yet—lest there should be flashes

And fulminations from the side of Rome,

An interdict on England—I will have My young son Henry crown'd the

King of England,

That so the Papal bolt may pass by England, 120

As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.

I'll have it done—and now.

*Becket.* Surely too young Even for this shadow of a crown; and

tho'

I love him heartily, I can spy already A strain of hard and headstrong in

him. Say,

The Queen should play his kingship against thine!

*Henry.* I will not think so, Thomas. Who shall crown him?

Canterbury is dying.

*Becket.* The next Canterbury.

*Henry.* And who shall he be, my friend Thomas? Who?

*Becket.* Name him; the Holy Father will confirm him. 130

*Henry* (*lays his hand on Becket's shoulder*). Here!

*Becket.* Mock me not. I am not even a monk.

Thy jest—no more. Why—look—is this a sleeve

For an archbishop?

*Henry.* But the arm within Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my foes.

*Becket.* A soldier's, not a spiritual arm.

*Henry.* I lack a spiritual soldier, Thomas—

A man of this world and the next to boot.

*Becket.* There's Gilbert Foliot.

*Henry.* He! too thin, too thin. Thou art the man to fill out the Church robe;

Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much for me. 140

*Becket.* Roger of York.

*Henry.* Roger is Roger of York; King, Church, and State to him but foils wherein

To set that precious jewel, Roger of York.

No.

*Becket.* Henry of Winchester?

*Henry.* Him who crown'd

Stephen—

King Stephen's brother! No; too royal for me.

And I'll have no more Anselms.

*Becket.* Sire, the business Of thy whole kingdom waits me; let me go.

*Henry.* Answer me first.

*Becket.* Then for thy barren jest Take thou mine answer in bare commonplace—

*Nolo episcopari.*

*Henry.* Ay, but *Nolo* 150

*Archiepiscopari*, my good friend, Is quite another matter.

*Becket.* A more awful one.

Make me archbishop! Why, my liege, I know

Some three or four poor priests a thousand times

Fitter for this grand function. *Me* archbishop!

God's favor and king's favor might so clash

That thou and I— That were a jest indeed!

*Henry.* Thou angerest me, man; I do not jest.

*Enter ELEANOR and SIR REGINALD FITZURSE.*

*ELEANOR (singing).*

Over! the sweet summer closes,  
The reign of the roses is done— 160

*Henry (to Becket, who is going).*  
Thou shalt not go. I have not ended with thee.

*Eleanor (seeing chart on table.)* This chart with the red line! her bower! whose bower?

*Henry.* The chart is not mine, but Becket's; take it, Thomas.

*Eleanor.* Becket! O,—ay—and these chessmen on the floor—the king's crown broken! Becket hath beaten thee again—and thou hast kicked down the board. I know thee of old. 172

*Henry.* True enough, my mind was set upon other matters.

*Eleanor.* What matters? State matters? love matters?

*Henry.* My love for thee, and thine for me.

*ELEANOR.*

Over! the sweet summer closes,  
The reign of the roses is done; 180  
Over and gone with the roses,  
And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine lasts longer. I would I were in Aquitaine again—your North chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes,  
And never a flower at the close;  
Over and gone with the roses,  
And winter again and the snows. 189

That was not the way I ended it first—but unsymmetrically, preposterously, illogically, out of passion, without art—like a song of the people. Will you have it? The last Parthian shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's left breast, and all left-handedness and under-handedness.

And never a flower at the close;  
Over and gone with the roses,  
Not over and gone with the rose. 200

True, one rose will outblossom the rest, one rose in a bower. I speak after my fancies, for I am a Troubadour, you know, and won the violet at Toulouse; but my voice is harsh here, not in tune, a nightingale out of season; for marriage, rose or no rose, has killed the golden violet.

*Becket.* Madam, you do ill to scorn wedded love. 210

*Eleanor.* So I do. Louis of France loved me, and I dreamed that I loved Louis of France; and I loved Henry of England, and Henry of England dreamed that he loved me; but the marriage-garland withers even with the putting on, the bright link rusts with the breath of the first after-marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the ripening of the harvest, and the honey-moon is the gall of Love; he dies of his honey-moon. I could pity this poor world myself that it is no better ordered. 224

*Henry.* Dead is he, my Queen? What, altogether? Let me swear nay

to that by this cross on thy neck. God's eyes! what a lovely cross! what jewels!

*Eleanor.* Doth it please you? Take it and wear it on that hard heart of yours — there. 229

*[Gives it to him.]*  
*Henry (puts it on).* On this left breast before so hard a heart,

To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

*Eleanor.* Has my simple song set you jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme — 239

*Henry.* That the heart were lost in the rhyme, and the matter in the metre. May we not pray you, madam, to spare us the hardness of your facility?

*Eleanor.* The wells of Castaly are not wasted upon the desert. We did but jest.

*Henry.* There's no jest on the brows of Herbert there. What is it, Herbert?

*Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM.*

*Herbert.* My liege, the good archbishop is no more.

*Henry.* Peace to his soul! 250

*Herbert.* I left him with peace on his face, — that sweet other-world smile, which will be reflected in the spiritual body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishopric.

*Henry.* Ha, Becket! thou rememberest our talk! 260

*Becket.* My heart is full of tears — I have no answer.

*Henry.* Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy, would only breed the past again. Come to me to-morrow. Thou hast but to hold out thy hand. Meanwhile the revenues are mine. A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat.

*[Leaps over the table, and exit.]*

*Becket.* He did prefer me to the chancellorship, Believing I should ever aid the Church — 270

But have I done it? He commends me now

From out his grave to this archbishopric.

*Herbert.* A dead man's dying wish should be of weight.

*Becket.* His should. Come with me. Let me learn at full

The manner of his death, and all he said.

*[Exeunt Herbert and Becket.]*

*Eleanor.* Fitzurse, that chart with the red line — thou sawest it — her bower.

*Fitzurse.* Rosamund's? 279

*Eleanor.* Ay — there lies the secret of her whereabouts, and the King gave it to his Chancellor.

*Fitzurse.* To this son of a London merchant — how your Grace must hate him!

*Eleanor.* Hate him? as brave a soldier as Henry and a goodlier man: but thou — dost thou love this Chancellor, that thou hast sworn a voluntary allegiance to him? 290

*Fitzurse.* Not for my love toward him, but because he had the love of the King. How should a baron love a beggar on horseback, with the retinue of three kings behind him, out-royal-ling royalty? Besides, he help the King to break down our castles, for the which I hate him. 298

*Eleanor.* For the which I honor him. Statesman, not Churchman, he. A great and sound policy that; I could embrace him for it: you could not see the King for the kinglings.

*Fitzurse.* Ay, but he speaks to a noble as tho' he were a churl, and to a churl as if he were a noble.

*Eleanor.* Pride of the plebeian!

*Fitzurse.* And this plebeian like to be Archbishop! 309

*Eleanor.* True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor. 317

*Fitzurse.* Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund — his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

*Eleanor.* Thou feel for me! — paramour — rival! King Louis had no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less — now neither more nor less — not at all; the cup's empty. I would she were but his paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Rival! — ay, and when the King passes, there may come a crash and embroilment as in Stephen's time; and her children — canst thou not — that secret matter which would heat the King against thee (*whispers him and he starts*). Nay, that is safe with me as with thyself; but canst thou not — thou art drowned in debt — thou shalt have our love, our silence, and our gold — canst thou not — if thou light upon her — free me from her? 345

*Fitzurse.* Well, madam, I have loved her in my time.

*Eleanor.* No, my bear, thou hast not. My Courts of Love would have held thee guiltless of love — the fine attractions and repulses, the delicacies, the subtleties.

*Fitzurse.* Madam, I loved according to the main purpose and intent of Nature. 355

*Eleanor.* I warrant thee! thou wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs cracked — enough of this. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may (*clenches her fist*) — may at least have my cry against him and her, — and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self. 367

*Fitzurse.* Ay, but the young colt winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

*Eleanor.* Us!

*Fitzurse.* Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were more than I buzzing round the blossom — De Tracy — even that flint De Brito. 378

*Eleanor.* Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her as hateful to herself and to the King as she is to me.

*Fitzurse.* I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rose-faced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King —

*Eleanor.* Let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

## ACT I

## SCENE I. — BECKET'S HOUSE IN LONDON

*Chamber barely furnished.* BECKET *unrobing.* HERBERT OF BOSHAM and SERVANT.

*Servant.* Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

*Becket.* Friend, am I so much better than thyself

That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out

With this day's work; get thee to thine own bed.

Leave me with Herbert, friend.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Help me off, Herbert, with this — and this.

*Herbert.* Was not the people's blessing as we passed

Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

*Becket.* The people know their Church a tower of strength,

A bulwark against Throne and Baron age. 10

Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

*Herbert.* Is it so much heavier than thy chancellor's robe?

*Becket.* No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's Together more than mortal man can bear.

*Herbert.* Not heavier than thine armor at Toulouse?

*Becket.* O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship

I more than once have gone against the Church.

*Herbert.* To please the King?

*Becket.* Ay, and the King of kings.

Or justice; for it seem'd to me but  
just

The Church should pay her scutage  
like the lords.

But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert  
Foliot

That I am not the man to be your pri-  
mate,

For Henry could not work a miracle —  
Make an archbishop of a soldier?

*Herbert.* Ay,  
For Gilbert Foliot held himself the  
man.

*Becket.* Am I the man? My mother,  
ere she bore me,  
Dream'd that twelve stars fell glitter-  
ing out of heaven

Into her bosom.

*Herbert.* Ay, the fire, the light,  
The spirit of the twelve Apostles en-  
ter'd

Into thy making.

*Becket.* And when I was a child,  
The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep, 31  
Gave me the golden keys of Paradise.  
Dream,

Or prophecy, that?

*Herbert.* Well, dream and prophecy  
both.

\* *Becket.* And when I was of Theo-  
bald's household, once —  
The good old man would sometimes  
have his jest —

He took his mitre off, and set it on me,  
And said, 'My young archbishop —  
thou wouldst make  
A stately archbishop!' Jest or pro-  
phesy there?

*Herbert.* Both, Thomas, both.

*Becket.* Am I the man? That rang  
Within my head last night, and when  
I slept 40

Methought I stood in Canterbury  
Minster,

And spake to the Lord God, and said,  
'O Lord,

I have been a lover of wines, and deli-  
cate meats,

And secular splendors, and a favorer  
Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder  
Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and  
lions, and lynxes.

'Am I the man?' And the Lord an-  
swer'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more  
the man'

And then I asked again, 'O Lord my  
God,

Henry the King hath been my friend,  
my brother, 50

And mine uplifter in this world, and  
chosen me

For this thy great archbishopric, be-  
lieving

That I should go against the Church  
with him,

And I shall go against him with the  
Church,

And I have said no word of this to him.  
Am I the man?' And the Lord an-  
swer'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more  
the man.'

And thereupon, methought, He drew  
toward me,

And smote me down upon the minster  
floor.

I fell.

*Herbert.* God make not thee, but  
thy foes, fall! 60

*Becket.* I fell. Why fall? Why  
did He smite me? What?

Shall I fall off — to please the King  
once more?

Not fight — tho' somehow traitor to  
the King —

My truest and mine utmost for the  
Church?

*Herbert.* Thou canst not fall that  
way. Let traitor be;

For how have fought thine utmost  
for the Church,

Save from the throne of thine arch-  
bishopric?

And how been made archbishop hadst  
thou told him,

'I mean to fight mine utmost for the  
Church,

Against the King?'

*Becket.* But dost thou think the  
King 70

Forced mine election?

*Herbert.* I do think the King  
Was potent in the election, and why  
not?

Why should not Heaven have so in-  
spired the King?

Be comforted. Thou art the man —  
be thou

A mightier Anselm.

*Becket.* I do believe thee, then. I  
am the man.

And yet I seem appall'd — on such a sudden

At such an eagle-height I stand and see

The rift that runs between me and the King.

I served our Theobald well when I was with him; 80

I served King Henry well as Chancellor;

I am his no more, and I must serve the Church.

This Canterbury is only less than Rome,

And all my doubts I fling from me like dust,

Winnow and scatter all scruples to the wind,

And all the puissance of the warrior,  
And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,

And all the heap'd experiences of life,

I cast upon the side of Canterbury —  
Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits  
With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons,  
thro' 91

The random gifts of careless kings,  
have graspt

Her livings, her advowsons, granges,  
farms,

And goodly acres — we will make her whole;

Not one rood lost. And for these  
Royal customs,

These ancient Royal customs — they  
are Royal,

Not of the Church — and let them be anathema.

And all that speak for them anathema.  
*Herbert.* Thomas, thou art moved  
too much.

*Becket.* O Herbert, here  
I gash myself asunder from the King,  
Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine  
own, a grief 101

To show the scar for ever — his, a hate

Not ever to be heal'd.

*Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD, flying from SIR REGINALD FITZURSE.  
Drops her veil.*

*Becket.* Rosamund de Clifford!

*Rosamund.* Save me, father, hide me — they follow me — and I must not be known.

*Becket.* Pass in with Herbert there.  
[*Reunt Rosamund and Herbert by side door.*

*Enter FITZURSE.*

*Fitzurse.* The archbishop!

*Becket.* Ay! what wouldst thou, Reginald?

*Fitzurse.* Why — why, my lord, I follow'd — follow'd one

*Becket.* And then what follows? Let me follow thee. 110

*Fitzurse.* It much imports me I should know her name.

*Becket.* What her?

*Fitzurse.* The woman that I follow'd hither.

*Becket.* Perhaps it may import her all as much

Not to be known.

*Fitzurse.* And what care I for that? Come, come, my lord archbishop; I saw that door

Close even now upon the woman.

*Becket.* Well?

*Fitzurse (making for the door).* Nay, let me pass, my lord, for I must know.

*Becket.* Back, man!

*Fitzurse.* Then tell me who and what she is.

*Becket.* Art thou so sure thou follow'dst anything?

Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for thine eyes 120

Glare stupid-wild with wine.

*Fitzurse (making to the door).* I must and will.

I care not for thy new archbishopric.

*Becket.* Back, man, I tell thee! What! Shall I forget my new archbishopric  
And smite thee with my crozier on the skull?

'Fore God, I am a mightier man than thou.

*Fitzurse.* It well befits thy new archbishopric

To take the vagabond woman of the street

Into thine arms!

*Becket.* O drunken ribaldry! Out, beast! out, bear!

*Fitzurse.* I shall remember this.

*Becket.* Do, and begone!

[*Exit Fitzurse.*

[*Going to the door, sees De Tracy.*

Tracy, what dost thou here?

*De Tracy.* My lord, I follow'd Re-  
ginald Fitzurse. 132

*Becket.* Follow him out!

*De Tracy.* I shall remember this  
Discourtesy. [Exit.

*Becket.* Do. These be those baron-  
brutes

That havock'd all the land in Stephen's  
day.

Rosamund de Clifford!

*Re-enter ROSAMUND and HERBERT.*

*Rosamund.* Here am I.

*Becket.* Why here?

We gave thee to the charge of John  
of Salisbury,

To pass thee to thy secret bower to-  
morrow.

Wast thou not told to keep thyself  
from sight?

*Rosamund.* Poor bird of passage!  
so I was; but, father, 140

They say that you are wise in winged  
things,

And know the ways of Nature. Bar  
the bird

From following the fled summer—a  
chink—he's out,

Gone! And there stole into the city  
a breath

Full of the meadows, and it minded me  
Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and  
the walks

Where I could move at pleasure, and  
I thought

'Lo! I must out or die.'

*Becket.* Or out and die.

And what hast thou to do with this  
Fitzurse?

*Rosamund.* Nothing. He sued my  
hand. I shook at him. 150

He found me once alone. Nay—nay  
—I cannot

Tell you. My father drove him and  
his friends,

De Tracy and De Brito, from our  
castle.

I was but fourteen and an April then.  
I heard him swear revenge.

*Becket.* Why will you court it

By self-exposure? flutter out at night?

Make it so hard to save a moth from  
the fire?

*Rosamund.* I have saved many of

'em. You catch 'em, so,  
Softly, and fling them out to the free  
air.

They burn themselves *within*-door.

*Becket.* Our good John

Must speed you to your bower at once.

The child 161

Is there already.

*Rosamund.* Yes—the child—the  
child—

O, rare, a whole long day of open field!

*Becket.* Ay, but you go disguised.

*Rosamund.* O, rare again!

We'll baffle them, I warrant. What  
shall it be?

I'll go as a nun.

*Becket.* No.

*Rosamund.* What, not good enough

Even to play at nun?

*Becket.* Dan John with a nun,

That Map and these new railers at the  
Church

May plaister his clean name with  
scurrilous rhymes!

No! 170

Go like a monk, cowling and clouding  
up

That fatal star, thy beauty, from the  
squint

Of lust and glare of malice. Good-  
night! Good-night!

*Rosamund.* Father, I am so tender  
to all hardness!

Nay, father, first thy blessing.

*Becket.* Wedded?

*Rosamund.* Father!

*Becket.* Well, well! I ask no more.

Heaven bless thee! hence!

*Rosamund.* O holy father, when  
thou seest him next,

Commend me to thy friend.

*Becket.* What friend?

*Rosamund.* The King.

*Becket.* Herbert, take out a score of  
armed men

To guard this bird of passage to her  
cage; 180

And watch Fitzurse, and if he follow  
thee,

Make him thy prisoner. I am Chan-  
cellor yet.

[Exeunt Herbert and Rosamund.

Poor soul! poor soul!

My friend, the King!—O thou Great  
Seal of England,

Given me by my dear friend, the King  
of England—

We long have wrought together, thou  
and I—

Now must I send thee as a common friend

To tell the King, my friend, I am against him.

We are friends no more; he will say that, not I.

The worldly bond between us is dissolved,

Not yet the love. Can I be under him

As Chancellor? as Archbishop over him?

Go therefore like a friend slighted by one

That hath climb'd up to nobler company.

Not slighted—all but moan'd for. Thou must go.

I have not dishonor'd thee—I trust I have not—

Not mangled justice. May the hand that next

Inherits thee be but as true to thee As mine hath been! O, my dear friend, the King!

O brother!—I may come to martyrdom.

I am martyr in myself already. Herbert!

*Herbert (re-entering).* My lord, the town is quiet, and the moon Divides the whole long street with light and shade.

No footfall—no Fitzurse. We have seen her home.

*Becket.* The hog hath tumbled himself into some corner, Some ditch, to snore away his drunkenness

Into the sober headache,—Nature's moral

Against excess. Let the Great Seal be sent

Back to the King to-morrow.

*Herbert.* Must that be? The King may rend the bearer limb from limb.

Think on it again.

*Becket.* Against the moral excess No physical ache, but failure it may be Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury

Hath often laid a cold hand on my heats,

And Herbert hath rebuked me even now.

I will be wise and wary, not the soldier

As Foliot swears it. — John, and out of breath!

*Enter JOHN OF SALISBURY.*

*John of Salisbury.* Thomas, thou wast not happy taking charge Of this wild Rosamund to please the King,

Nor am I happy having charge of her—

The included Danaë has escaped again

Her tower and her Acrisius—where to seek?

I have been about the city.

*Becket.* Thou wilt find her Back in her lodging. Go with her—at once—

To-night—my men will guard you to the gates.

Be sweet to her, she has many enemies.

Send the Great Seal by daybreak. Both, good-night!

## SCENE II

STREET IN NORTHAMPTON LEADING TO THE CASTLE

ELEANOR'S RETAINERS and BECKET'S RETAINERS fighting. *Enter ELEANOR and BECKET from opposite streets.*

*Eleanor.* Peace, fools!

*Becket.* Peace, friends! what idle brawl is this?

*Retainer of Becket.* They said—her Grace's people—thou wast found—

Liars! I shame to quote 'em—caught, my lord,

With a wanton in thy lodging—Hell requite 'em!

*Retainer of Eleanor.* My liege, the Lord Fitzurse reported this

In passing to the Castle even now.

*Retainer of Becket.* And then they mock'd us and we fell upon 'em,

For we would live and die for thee, my lord,

However kings and queens may frown on thee.



*Becket to his Retainers.* Go, go —  
no more of this!  
*Eleanor to her Retainers.* Away!  
(*Exeunt Retainers.*) Fitzurse —  
*Becket.* Nay, let him be.  
*Eleanor.* No, no, my lord arch-  
bishop,  
'Tis known you are midwinter to all  
women,  
But often in your chancellorship you  
served  
The follies of the King.  
*Becket.* No, not these follies!  
*Eleanor.* My lord, Fitzurse beheld  
her in your lodging.  
*Becket.* Whom?  
*Eleanor.* Well — you know — the  
minion, Rosamund.  
*Becket.* He had good eyes!  
*Eleanor.* Then hidden in the street  
He watch'd her pass with John of  
Salisbury,  
And heard her cry, 'Where is this  
bower of mine?'  
*Becket.* Good ears too!  
*Eleanor.* You are going to the  
Castle,  
Will you subscribe the customs?  
• *Becket.* I leave that,  
Knowing how much you reverence  
Holy Church,  
My liege, to your conjecture.  
*Eleanor.* I and mine —  
And many a baron holds along with  
me —  
Are not so much at feud with Holy  
Church  
But we might take your side against  
the customs —  
So that you grant me one slight favor.  
*Becket.* What?  
*Eleanor.* A sight of that same  
chart which Henry gave you  
With the red line — 'her bower.'  
*Becket.* And to what end?  
*Eleanor.* That Church must scorn  
herself whose fearful priest  
Sits winking at the license of a king,  
Altho' we grant when kings are dan-  
gerous  
The Church must play into the hands  
of kings;  
Look! I would move this wanton from  
his sight  
And take the Church's danger on my-  
self.

*Becket.* For which she should be  
duly grateful.  
*Eleanor.* True!  
Tho' she that binds the bond, herself  
should see  
That kings are faithful to their mar-  
riage vow.  
*Becket.* Ay, madam, and queens  
also.  
*Eleanor.* And queens also!  
What is your drift?  
*Becket.* My drift is to the Castle,  
Where I shall meet the barons and  
my King. [*Exit.*  
DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BRITO,  
DE MORVILLE (*passing*).  
*Eleanor.* To the Castle?  
*De Broc.* Ay!  
*Eleanor.* Stir up the King, the lords!  
Set all on fire against him!  
*De Brito.* Ay, good madam!  
[*Exeunt.*  
*Eleanor.* Fool! I will make thee  
hateful to thy King.  
Churl! I will have thee frighted into  
France,  
And I shall live to trample on thy  
grave.

## SCENE III

## THE HALL IN NORTHAMPTON CASTLE

*On one side of the stage the doors of an  
inner Council-chamber, half-open.  
At the bottom, the great doors of  
the Hall. ROGER ARCHBISHOP OF  
YORK, FOLIOT BISHOP OF LONDON,  
HILARY OF CHICHESTER, BISHOP  
OF HEREFORD, RICHARD DE HAST-  
INGS (Grand Prior of Templars),  
PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA (the Pope's  
Almoner), and others. DE BROC,  
FITZURSE, DE BRITO, DE MOR-  
VILLE, DE TRACY, and other BAR-  
ONS assembled — a table before them.  
JOHN OF OXFORD, President of the  
Council.*

*Enter BECKET and HERBERT OF BO-  
SHAM.*

*Becket.* Where is the King?  
*Roger of York.* Gone hawking on  
the Nene,  
His heart so gall'd with thine ingrati-  
tude,

He will not see thy face till thou hast  
sign'd

These ancient laws and customs of  
the realm.

Thy sending back the Great Seal  
madden'd him;

He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes  
away.

Take heed lest he destroy thee utterly.  
*Becket.* Then shalt thou step into  
my place and sign.

*Roger of York.* Didst thou not pro-  
mise Henry to obey

These ancient laws and customs of  
the realm? <sup>10</sup>

*Becket.* Saving the honor of my or-  
der—ay.

Customs, traditions, — clouds that  
come and go;

The customs of the Church are Peter's  
rock.

*Roger of York.* Saving thine order!  
But King Henry swear

That, saving his King's kingship, he  
would grant thee

The crown itself. Saving thine order,  
Thomas,

Is black and white at once, and comes  
to nought.

O bolster'd up with stubbornness and  
pride,

Wilt thou destroy the Church in fight-  
ing for it,

And bring us all to shame?

*Becket.* *Roger of York,*  
When I and thou were youths in  
Theobald's house, <sup>21</sup>

Twice did thy malice and thy cal-  
umnies

Exile me from the face of Theobald.  
Now I am Canterbury, and thou art

York.

*Roger of York.* And is not York the  
peer of Canterbury?

Did not Great Gregory bid Saint  
Austin here

Found two archbishoprics, London  
and York?

*Becket.* What came of that? The  
first archbishop fled,

And York lay barren for a hundred  
years.

Why, by this rule, Foliot may claim  
the pall <sup>30</sup>

For London too.

*Foliot* And with good reason too,

For London had a temple and a priest  
When Canterbury hardly bore a name.

*Becket.* The pagan temple of a  
pagan Rome!

The heathen priesthood of a heathen  
creed!

Thou goest beyond thyself in petu-  
lancy!

Who made thee London? Who, but  
Canterbury?

*John of Oxford.* Peace, peace, my  
lords! these customs are no  
longer

As Canterbury calls them, wandering  
clouds,

But by the King's command are writ-  
ten down, <sup>40</sup>

And by the King's command I, John  
of Oxford,

The President of this Council, read  
them.

*Becket.* Read!

*John of Oxford (reads).* 'All causes of  
advowsons and presentations, whether  
between laymen or clerics, shall be  
tried in the King's court.'

*Becket.* But that I cannot sign; for  
that would drag

The cleric before the civil judgment-  
seat,

And on a matter wholly spiritual. <sup>49</sup>

*John of Oxford.* 'If any cleric be  
accused of felony, the Church shall  
not protect him; but he shall answer  
to the summons of the King's court to  
be tried therein.'

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign.  
Is not the Church the visible Lord on  
earth?

Shall hands that do create the Lord  
be bound

Behind the back like laymen-criminals?  
The Lord be judged again by Pilate?

No! <sup>59</sup>

*John of Oxford.* 'When a bishopric  
falls vacant, the King, till another be  
appointed, shall receive the revenues  
thereof.'

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign. Is  
the King's treasury

A fit place for the moneys of the  
Church,

That be the patrimony of the poor?

*John of Oxford.* 'And when the va-  
cancy is to be filled up, the King shall  
summon the chapter of that church to

court, and the election shall be made in the Chapel Royal, with the consent of our lord the King, and by the advice of his Government.' 73

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign; for that would make Our island-Church a schism from Christendom, And weight down all free choice beneath the throne.

*Foliot.* And was thine own election so canonical, Good father?

*Becket.* If it were not, Gilbert Foliot, I mean to cross the sea to France, and lay

My crozier in the Holy Father's hands, And bid him re-create me, Gilbert Foliot. 81

*Foliot.* Nay; by another of these customs thou Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the seas Without the license of our lord the King.

*Becket.* That, too, I cannot sign. DE BROU, DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZURSE, DE MORVILLE, start up  
• — a clash of swords.

Sign and obey!  
*Becket.* My lords, is this a combat or a council?

Are ye my masters, or my lord the King?

Ye make this clashing for no love o' the customs

Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call them,

But that there be among you those that hold 90

Lands reft from Canterbury.  
*De Broc.* And mean to keep them, In spite of thee!

*Lords (shouting).* Sign, and obey the crown!

*Becket.* The crown? Shall I do less for Canterbury Than Henry for the crown? King Stephen gave

Many of the crown lands to those that helpt him;

So did Matilda, the King's mother. Mark,

When Henry came into his own again, Then he took back not only Stephen's gifts,

But his own mother's, lest the crown should be

Shorn of ancestral splendor. This did Henry. 100

Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury?

And thou, De Broc, that holdest Saltwood Castle—

*De Broc.* And mean to hold it, or—  
*Becket.* To have my life.

*De Broc.* The King is quick to anger; if thou anger him, We wait but the King's word to strike thee dead.

*Becket.* Strike, and I die the death of martyrdom; Strike, and ye set these customs by my death

Ringing their own death-knell thro' all the realm.

*Herbert.* And I can tell you, lords, ye are all as like To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart 110

As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.  
*John of Oxford.* Ay, sheathe your swords, ye will displease the King.

*De Broc.* Why, down then thou! but an he come to Saltwood, By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf! [*Sheathing his sword.*]

*Hilary.* O my good lord, I do entreat thee—sign.

Save the King's honor here before his barons.

He hath sworn that thou shouldst sign, and now but shuns

The semblance of defeat; I have heard him say

He means no more; so if thou sign, my lord,

That were but as the shadow of an assent. 120

*Becket.* 'T would seem too like the substance, if I sign'd.

*Philip de Eleemosyna.* My lord, thine ear! I have the ear of the Pope.

As thou hast honor for the Pope our master,

Have pity on him, sorely prest upon By the fierce Emperor and his Antipope.

Thou knowest he was forced to fly to France;

He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify

Thy King; for if thou go against thy King,

Then must he likewise go against thy King,

And then thy King might join the Antipope, <sup>130</sup>

And that would shake the Papacy as it stands.

Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals

He meant no harm nor damage to the Church.

Smoothe thou his pride — thy signing is but form;

Nay, and should harm come of it, it is the Pope

Will be to blame — not thou. Over and over

He told me thou shouldst pacify the King,

Lest there be battle between Heaven and Earth,

And Earth should get the better — for the time.

Cannot the Pope absolve thee if thou sign? <sup>140</sup>

*Becket.* Have I the orders of the Holy Father?

*Philip de Eleemosyna.* Orders, my lord — why, no; for what am I?

The secret whisper of the Holy Father. Thou, that hast been a statesman,

couldst thou always blurt thy free mind to the air?

*Becket.* If Rome be feeble, then should I be firm.

*Philip.* Take it not that way — balk not the Pope's will.

When he hath shaken off the Emperor,

He heads the Church against the King with thee.

*Richard de Hastings (kneeling).*

Becket, I am the oldest of the Templars; <sup>150</sup>

I knew thy father; he would be mine age

Had he lived now; think of me as thy father!

Behold thy father kneeling to thee, Becket.

Submit; I promise thee on my salvation

That thou wilt hear no more o' the customs.

*Becket.* What!

Hath Henry told thee? hast thou talk'd with him?

*Another Templar (kneeling).* Father, I am the youngest of the Templars,

Look on me as I were thy bodily son, For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.

*Philip.* Wilt thou hold out forever, Thomas Becket? <sup>160</sup>

Dost thou not hear?

*Becket (signs).* Why — there then — there — I sign,

And swear to obey the customs.

*Foliot.* Is it thy will,

My lord archbishop, that we too should sign?

*Becket.* O, ay, by that canonical obedience

Thou still hast owed thy father, Gilbert Foliot.

*Foliot.* Loyally and with good faith, my lord archbishop?

*Becket.* O, ay, with all that loyalty and good faith

Thou still hast shown thy primate, Gilbert Foliot.

[*Becket draws apart with Herbert.* Herbert, Herbert, have I betray'd the Church?

I'll have the paper back — blot out my name. <sup>170</sup>

*Herbert.* Too late, my lord: you see they are signing there.

*Becket.* False to myself — it is the will of God

To break me, prove me nothing of myself!

This almoner hath tasted Henry's gold. The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold.

And Rome is venal even to rottenness. I see it, I see it.

I am no soldier, as he said — at least No leader. Herbert, till I hear from

the Pope

I will suspend myself from all my functions. <sup>180</sup>

If fast and prayer, the lacerating scourge —

*Foliot (from the table).* My lord archbishop, thou hast yet to seal.

*Becket.* First, Foliot, let me see what I have sign'd. [*Goes to the table.*

What, this! and this! — what! new and old together!

Seal? If a seraph shouted from the sun,

And bade me seal against the rights of the Church,

I would anathematize him. I will not seal! *[Exit with Herbert.]*

*Enter KING HENRY.*

*Henry.* Where's Thomas? hath he signed? show me the papers! Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?

*John of Oxford.* He would not seal.

And when he sign'd, his face was stormy-red — 190

Shame, wrath, I know not what. He sat down there

And dropt it in his hands, and then a paleness,

Like the wan twilight after sunset, crept

Up even to the tonsure, and he groan'd, 'False to myself! It is the will of God!'

*Henry.* God's will be what it will, the man shall seal,

Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's son —

Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,

I'll crush him as the subject. Send for him back. *[Sits on his throne.]*

Barons and bishops of our realm of England, 200

After the nineteen winters of King Stephen —

A reign which was no reign, when none could sit

By his own hearth in peace; when murder common

As nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had fill'd

All things with blood; when every doorway blush'd,

Dash'd red with that unhallow'd pass-over;

When every baron ground his blade in blood;

The household dough was kneaded up with blood;

The mill-wheel turn'd in blood; the wholesome plow

Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds, 210

Till famine dwarf'd the race — I came, your King!

Nor dwelt alone, like a soft lord of the East,

In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools' ears

The flatteries of corruption — went abroad

Thro' all my counties, spied my people's ways;

Yea, heard the churl against the baron — yea,

And did him justice; sat in mine own courts

Judging my judges, that had found a King

Who ranged confusions, made the twilight day,

And struck a shape from out the vague, and law 220

From madness. And the event — our fallows till'd,

Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm again.

So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,

Had prosper'd in the main, but suddenly

Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated

The daughter of his host, and murder'd him.

Bishops — York, London, Chichester, Westminster —

Ye haled this tonsured devil into your courts;

But since your canon will not let you take

Life for a life, ye but degraded him

Where I had hang'd him. What doth hard murder care 231

For degradation? and that made me muse,

Being bounden by my coronation oath To do men justice. Look to it, your own selves!

Say that a cleric murder'd an archbishop,

What could ye do? Degrade, imprison him —

Not death for death. *John of Oxford.* But I, my liege, could swear,

To death for death.

*Henry.* And, looking thro' my reign, I found a hundred ghastly murders done

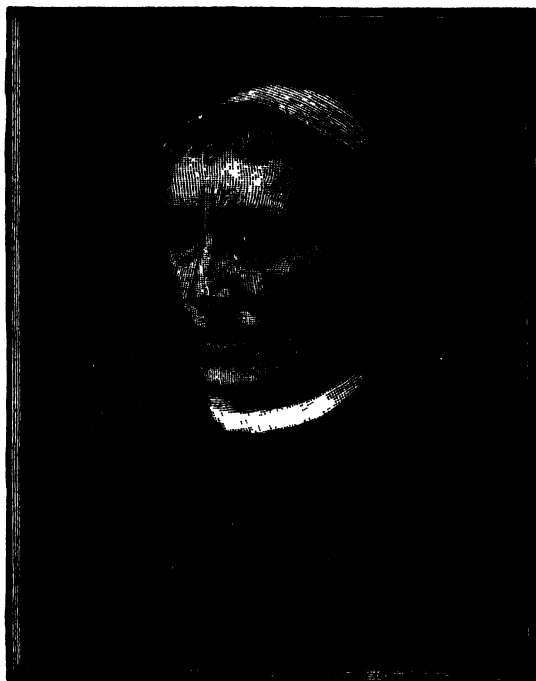
By men, the scum and offal of the Church; 140

Then, glancing thro' the story of this realm,

I came on certain wholesome usages,

Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's  
day,  
Good royal customs — had them writ-  
ten fair  
For John of Oxford here to read to you.  
*John of Oxford.* And I can easily  
swear to these as being  
The King's will and God's will and  
justice; yet

*Henry.* And Becket had my bosom  
on all this;  
If ever man by bonds of gratefulness —  
I raised him from the puddle of the  
gutter,  
I made him porcelain from the clay of  
the city —  
Thought that I knew him, err'd thro'  
love of him,



SIR HENRY IRVING AS BECKET

I could but read a part to-day, be-  
cause —

*Fitzurse.* Because my lord of Can-  
terbury —

*De Tracy.* Ay,

This lord of Canterbury —

*De Brito.*

As is his wont  
Too much of late whene'er your royal  
rights

Are mooted in our councils —

*Fitzurse.*

— made an uproar.

Hoped, were he chosen archbishop,  
Church and Crown,

Two sisters gliding in an equal  
dance,

Two rivers gently flowing side by  
side —

But no!

The bird that moults sings the same  
song again,

The snake that sloughs comes out a  
snake again.

Snake — ay, but he that lookt a fangless one

Issues a venomous adder.

For he, when having dofft the Chancellor's robe

Flung the Great Seal of England in my face —

Claim'd some of our crown lands for Canterbury —

My comrade, boon companion, my co-reveller,

The master of his master, the King's king. — <sup>270</sup>

God's eyes! I had meant to make him all but king.

Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well have sway'd

All England under Henry, the young King,

When I was hence. What did the traitor say?

False to himself, but ten-fold false to me!

The will of God — why, then it is my will —

Is he coming?

*Messenger (entering).* With a crowd of worshippers,

And holds his cross before him thro' the crowd,

As one that puts himself in sanctuary.

*Henry.* His cross!

*Roger of York.* His cross! I'll front him, cross to cross. <sup>280</sup>

[*Exit Roger of York.*]

*Henry.* His cross! it is the traitor that imputes

Treachery to his King!

It is not safe for me to look upon him.

Away — with me!

[*Goes in with his Barons to the Council Chamber, the door of which is left open.*]

*Enter BECKET, holding his cross of silver before him. The BISHOPS come round him.*

*Hereford.* The King will not abide thee with thy cross.

Permit me, my good lord, to bear it for thee,

Being thy chaplain.

*Becket.* No; it must protect me.

*Herbert.* As once he bore the standard of the Angles,

So now he bears the standard of the angels.

*Foliot.* I am the dean of the province; let me bear it. <sup>290</sup>

Make not thy King a traitorous murderer.

*Becket.* Did not your barons draw their swords against me?

*Enter ROGER OF YORK, with his cross, advancing to BECKET.*

*Becket.* Wherefore dost thou presume to bear thy cross,

Against the solemn ordinance from Rome,

Out of thy province?

*Roger of York.* Why dost thou presume,

Arm'd with thy cross, to come before the King?

If Canterbury bring his cross to court,

Let York bear his to mate with Canterbury.

*Foliot (seizing hold of Becket's cross).*

Nay, nay, my lord, thou must not brave the King.

Nay, let me have it. I will have it!

*Becket.* Away!

[*Flinging him off.*]

*Foliot.* He fasts, they say, this mired Hercules!

*He fast!* is that an arm of fast? My lord, <sup>301</sup>

Hadst thou not sign'd, I had gone along with thee;

But thou the shepherd hast betray'd the sheep,

And thou art perjured, and thou wilt not seal.

As Chancellor thou wast against the Church,

Now as archbishop goest against the King;

For, like a fool, thou know'st no middle way.

Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the King?

*Becket.* Strong — not in mine own self, but Heaven; true <sup>310</sup>

To either function, holding it; and thou

Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy flesh,

Not spirit — thou remainest Gilbert Foliot,

A worldly follower of the worldly strong.

I, bearing this great ensign, make it clear

Under what prince I fight.

*Foliot.* My lord of York,  
Let us go in to the Council, where our  
bishops

And our great lords will sit in judgment on him.

*Becket.* Sons sit in judgment on  
their father! — then  
The spire of Holy Church may prick  
the graves —

Her crypt among the stars. Sign?  
seal? I promised

The King to obey these customs, not  
yet written,

Saving mine order; true, too, that  
when written

I sign'd them — being a fool, as Foliot  
call'd me.

I hold not by my signing. Get ye  
hence,

Tell what I say to the King.

[*Exeunt* Hereford, Foliot, and  
other Bishops.

*Roger of York.* The Church will  
hate thee. [*Exit.*

*Becket.* Serve my best friend and  
make him my worst foe;

Fight for the Church, and set the  
Church against me!

*Herbert.* To be honest is to set all  
knaves against thee.

Ah, Thomas, excommunicate them  
all!

*Hereford (re-entering).* I cannot  
brook the turmoil thou hast  
raised.

I would, my lord Thomas of Canter-  
bury,

Thou wert plain Thomas and not Can-  
terbury,

Or that thou wouldst deliver Canter-  
bury

To our King's hands again, and be at  
peace.

*Hilary (re-entering).* For hath not  
thine ambition set the Church  
This day between the hammer and  
the anvil —

Fealty to the King, obedience to thy-  
self?

*Herbert.* What say the bishops?

*Hilary.* Some have pleaded for him,  
But the King rages — most are with  
the King;

And some are reeds, that one time  
sway to the current,

And to the wind another. But we  
hold

Thou art forsworn; and no forsworn  
archbishop

Shall helm the Church. We therefore  
place ourselves

Under the shield and safeguard of the  
Pope,

And cite thee to appear before the  
Pope,

And answer thine accusers. Art  
thou deaf?

*Becket.* I hear you. [*Clash of arms.*

*Hilary.* Dost thou hear those others?

*Becket.* Ay!

*Roger of York (re-entering).* The  
King's 'God's eyes!' come now  
so thick and fast

We fear that he may reave thee of  
thine own.

Come on, come on! it is not fit for us  
To see the proud archbishop mutilated.  
Say that he blind thee and tear out  
thy tongue.

*Becket.* So be it. He begins at top  
with me;

They crucified Saint Peter downward.

*Roger of York.* Nay,

But for their sake who stagger betwixt  
thine

Appeal and Henry's anger, yield.

*Becket.* Hence, Satan!

[*Exit* Roger of York.

*Fitzurse (re-entering).* My lord, the  
King demands three hundred  
marks,

Due from his castles of Berkhamstead  
and Eye

When thou thereof wast warden.

*Becket.* Tell the King

I spent thrice that in fortifying his  
castles.

*De Tracy (re-entering).* My lord, the  
King demands seven hundred  
marks,

Lent at the siege of Toulouse by the  
King.

*Becket.* I led seven hundred knights  
and fought his wars.

*De Brito (re-entering).* My lord,  
the King demands five hundred  
marks,

Advanced thee at his instance by the  
Jews,

For which the King was bound secur-  
ity.



*Becket.* I thought it was a gift; I thought it was a gift.

*Enter LORD LEICESTER (followed by BARONS and BISHOPS).*

*Leicester.* My lord, I come unwillingly. The King

Demands a strict account of all those revenues <sup>370</sup>

From all the vacant sees and abbacies,  
Which came into thy hands when  
Chancellor.

*Becket.* How much might that amount to, my lord Leicester?

*Leicester.* Some thirty — forty thousand silver marks.

*Becket.* Are these your customs? O my good lord Leicester,

The King and I were brothers. All I had

I lavish'd for the glory of the King;  
I shone from him, for him, his glory,

his

Reflection. Now the glory of the Church

Hath swallow'd up the glory of the King;  
<sup>380</sup>

I am his no more, but hers. Grant me one day

To ponder these demands.

*Leicester.* Hear first thy sentence!

The King and all his lords —

*Becket.* Son, first hear me!

*Leicester.* Nay, nay, canst thou, that holdest thine estates

In fee and barony of the King, decline

The judgment of the King?

*Becket.* The King! I hold

Nothing in fee and barony of the King.

Whatever the Church owns — she holds it in

Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to One earthly sceptre.

*Leicester.* Nay, but hear thy judgment. <sup>390</sup>

The King and all his barons —

*Becket.* Judgment! Barons!

Who but the bridegroom dares to judge the bride,

Or he the bridegroom may appoint? Not he

That is not of the house, but from the street

Stain'd with the mire thereof. I had been so true

To Henry and mine office that the King

Would throne me in the great archbishopric;

And I, that knew mine own infirmity,

For the King's pleasure rather than God's cause

Took it upon me — err'd thro' love of him. <sup>400</sup>

Now therefore God from me withdraws Himself,

And the King too.

What! forty thousand marks!

Why, thou, the King, the Pope, the Saints, the world,

Know that when made archbishop I was freed,

Before the Prince and chief justiciary,

From every bond and debt and obligation

Incurr'd as Chancellor.

Hear me, son. As gold

Outvalues dross, light darkness, Abel Cain,

The soul the body, and the Church the Throne,

I charge thee, upon pain of mine anathema, <sup>410</sup>

That thou obey, not me, but God in me,

Rather than Henry. I refuse to stand

By the King's censure, make my cry to the Pope,

By whom I will be judged; refer myself,

The King, these customs, all the Church, to him,

And under his authority — I depart. <sup>[Going.]</sup>

<sup>[Leicester looks at him doubtfully.]</sup> Am I a prisoner?

*Leicester.* By Saint Lazarus, no! I am confounded by thee. Go, in peace.

*De Broc.* In peace now — but after. Take that for earnest.

<sup>[Flings a bone at him from the rushes.]</sup>

*De Brito, Fitzurse, De Tracy, and others (flinging wisps of rushes).* Ay,

go in peace, catiff, catiff! And that too, perjured prelate — and that, turn-

coat shaveling! There, there, there! traitor, traitor, traitor!

*Becket.* Mannerless wolves !  
[Turning and facing them.]

*Herbert.* Enough, my lord, enough !

*Becket.* Barons of England and of Normandy,

When what ye shake at doth but seem to fly,

True test of coward, ye follow with a yell.

But I that threw the mightiest knight of France,

Sir Engelram de Trie, —

*Herbert.* Enough, my lord.

*Becket.* More than enough. I play the fool again.

*Enter HERALD.*

*Herald.* The King commands you, upon pain of death,

That none should wrong or injure your archbishop.

*Abbot.* Deal gently with the young man Absalom.

[Great doors of the Hall at the back open, and discover a crowd.]

*They shout :*

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord !

#### SCENE IV

#### REFECTORY OF THE MONASTERY AT NORTHAMPTON

#### *A Banquet on the Tables.*

*Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAINERS.*

*First Retainer.* Do thou speak first.

*Second Retainer.* Nay, thou ! Nay, thou ! Hast not thou drawn the short straw ?

*First Retainer.* My lord archbishop, wilt thou permit us —

*Becket.* To speak without stammering and like a free man ? Ay.

*First Retainer.* My lord, permit us then to leave thy service.

*Becket.* When ?

*First Retainer.* Now.

*Becket.* To-night ?

*First Retainer.* To-night, my lord.

*Becket.* And why ?

*First Retainer.* My lord, we leave thee not without tears.

*Becket.* Tears ? Why not stay with me then ?

*First Retainer.* My lord, we cannot yield thee an answer altogether to thy satisfaction.

*Becket.* I warrant you, or your own either. Shall I find you one ? The King hath frowned upon me.

*First Retainer.* That is not altogether our answer, my lord.

*Becket.* No ; yet all but all. Go, go ! Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years.

*First Retainer.* And so we have. We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou not say, ' God bless you,' ere we go ?

*Becket.* God bless you all ! God redder your pale blood ! But mine is human-red ; and when ye shall hear it is poured out upon earth, and see it mounting to heaven, my ' God bless you,' that seems sweet to you now, will blast and blind you like a curse.

*First Retainer.* We hope not, my lord. Our humblest thanks for your blessing. Farewell !

[Exit Retainers.]

*Becket.* Farewell, friends ! farewell, swallows ! I wrong the bird ; she leaves only the nest she built, they leave the builder. Why ? Am I to be murdered to-night ?

[Knocking at the door.]

*Attendant.* Here is a missive left at the gate by one from the castle.

*Becket.* Cornwall's hand or Leicester's ; they write marvellously alike.

[Reading.]

' Fly at once to France, to King Louis of France ; there be those about our King who would have thy blood.'

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden to our supper ?

*Attendant.* Ay, my lord, and divers other earls and barons. But the hour is past, and our brother, Master Cook, he makes moan that all be a-getting cold.

*Becket.* And I make my moan along with him. Cold after warm, winter after summer, and the golden leaves, these earls and barons, that clung to me, frosted off me by the first cold frown of the King. Cold, but look

how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem. Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast.

*Herbert.* That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

*Becket.* And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church is ever at variance with the kings, and ever at one with the poor. I marked a group of lazars in the marketplace—half-rag, half-sore—beggars, poor rogues (Heaven bless 'em!) who never saw nor dreamed of such a banquet. I will amaze them. Call them in, I say. They shall henceforward be my carls and barons—our lords and masters in Christ Jesus. 89

[*Exit Herbert.*]

If the King hold his purpose, I am myself a beggar. Forty thousand marks! forty thousand devils—and these craven bishops!

*A Poor Man (entering) with his dog.* My lord archbishop, may I come in with my poor friend, my dog? The King's verdurer caught him a-hunting in the forest, and cut off his paws. The dog followed his calling, my lord. I ha' carried him ever so many miles in my arms, and he licks my face and moans and cries out against the King. 103

*Becket.* Better thy dog than thee. The King's courts would use thee worse than thy dog—they are too bloody. Were the Church king, it would be otherwise. Poor beast! poor beast! set him down. I will bind up his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! Who misuses a dog would misuse a child—they cannot speak for themselves. Past help! his paws are past help. God help him! 115

*Enter the BEGGARS (and seat themselves at the Tables). BECKET and HERBERT wait upon them.*

*First Beggar.* Swine, sheep, ox—here 's a French supper! When thieves fall out, honest men—

*Second Beggar.* Is the archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper? 120

*First Beggar.* Well, then, how does it go? When honest men fall out, thieves—no, it can't be that.

*Second Beggar.* Who stole the widow's one sitting hen o' Sunday, when she was at mass?

*First Beggar.* Come, come! thou hadst thy share on her. Sitting hen! Our Lord Becket's our great sitting-hen cock, and we should n't ha' been sitting here if the barons and bishops had n't been a-sitting on the archbishop. 133

*Becket.* Ay, the princes sat in judgment against me, and the Lord hath prepared your table—*Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

*A Voice.* Becket, beware of the knife!

*Becket.* Who spoke? 140

*Third Beggar.* Nobody, my lord. What's that, my lord?

*Becket.* Venison.

*Third Beggar.* Venison?

*Becket.* Buck—deer, as you call it.

*Third Beggar.* King's meat! By the Lord, won't we pray for your lordship!

*Becket.* And, my children, your prayers will do more for me in the day of peril that dawns darkly and drearily over the house of God—yea, and in the day of judgment also, than the swords of the craven sycophants would have done had they remained true to me whose bread they have partaken. I must leave you to your banquet. Feed, feast, and be merry. Herbert, for the sake of the Church itself, if not for my own, I must fly to France to-night. Come with me.

[*Exit with Herbert.*]

*Third Beggar.* Here—all of you—my lord's health! (*they drink*). Well—if that is n't goodly wine— 164

*First Beggar.* Then there isn't a goodly wench to serve him with it; they were fighting for her to-day in the street.

*Third Beggar.* Peace!

FIRST BEGGAR.

The black sheep baaed to the miller's ewe-lamb, 170

'The miller's away for to-night.'

'Black sheep,' quoth she, 'too black a sin for me.'

And what said the black sheep, my masters?

'We can make a black sin white.'

*Third Beggar.* Peace!

FIRST BEGGAR.

'Ewe-lamb, ewe-lamb, I am here by the dam.'

But the miller came home that night,  
And so dusted his back with the meal in  
his sack,

That he made the black sheep white.

*Third Beggar.* Be we not of the family? be we not a-supping with the head of the family? be we not in my lord's own refractory? Out from among us; thou art our black sheep. 185

*Enter the four KNIGHTS.*

*Fitzurse.* Sheep, said he? And sheep without the shepherd, too. Where is my lord archbishop? Thou the lustiest and lousiest of this Cain's brotherhood, answer. 190

*Third Beggar.* With Cain's answer, my lord. Am I his keeper? Thou shouldst call him Cain, not me.

*Fitzurse.* So I do, for he would murder his brother the State.

*Third Beggar (rising and advancing).* No, my lord; but because the Lord hath set his mark upon him that no man should murder him.

*Fitzurse.* Where is he? where is he? 201

*Third Beggar.* With Cain belike, in the land of Nod, or in the land of France for aught I know.

*Fitzurse.* France! Ha! De Morville, Tracy, Brito—fled is he? Cross swords, all of you! swear to follow him! Remember the Queen!

[*The four Knights cross their swords.*]

*De Brito.* They mock us; he is here. 210

[*All the Beggars rise and advance upon them.*]

*Fitzurse.* Come, you filthy knaves, let us pass.

*Third Beggar.* Nay, my lord, let us pass. We be a-going home after our supper in all humbleness, my lord; for the archbishop loves humbleness, my lord, and though we be

fifty to four, we daren't fight you with our crutches, my lord. There now, if thou hast not laid hands upon me! and my fellows know that I am all one scale like a fish. I pray God I haven't given thee my leprosy, my lord. 224

[*Fitzurse shrinks from him, and another presses upon De Brito.*]

*De Brito.* Away, dog!

*Fourth Beggar.* And I was bit by a mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog already by this token, that tho' I can drink wine I cannot bide water, my lord; and I want to bite, I want to bite, and they do say the very breath catches. 232

*De Brito.* Insolent clown! Shall I smite him with the edge of the sword?

*De Morville.* No, nor with the flat of it either. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep are scattered. Smite the sheep, and the shepherd will excommunicate thee.

*De Brito.* Yet my fingers itch to beat him into nothing. 241

*Fifth Beggar.* So do mine, my lord. I was born with it, and sulphur won't bring it out o' me. But for all that the archbishop washed my feet o' Tuesday. He likes it, my lord.

*Sixth Beggar.* And see here, my lord, this rag fro' the gangrene i' my leg. It's humbling—it smells o' human natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my lord? for the archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord. 253

*De Morville.* Faugh! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go.

[*They draw back, Beggars following.*]

*Seventh Beggar.* My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating sickness. They be dead while I be a-supping.

*Eighth Beggar.* And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be dead ten times o'er i' one day w' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it along w' me, for the archbishop likes it, my lord. 265

[*Pressing upon the Knights till they disappear thro' the door.*]

*Third Beggar.* Crutches, and itches, and leprosies, and ulcers, and gan

grenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our archbishop!

*First Beggar.* I'll go back again. I hain't half done yet.

*Herbert of Bosham (entering).* My friends, the archbishop bids you good-night. He hath retired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars, from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness.

*Third Beggar.* So we will — so we will, I warrant thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! Vive le Roy! That's the English of it.

## ACT II

### SCENE I. — ROSAMUND'S BOWER

*A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild-flowers with a bench before it.*

*Voices heard singing among the trees.*

#### DUET.

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.
1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep from the strand,  
One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.
1. Love that can shapen or can shatter a life till the life shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life from the dead.
1. Keep him away from the lone little isle.  
Let us be, let us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it — he, it is he,  
Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.

*Enter HENRY and ROSAMUND.*

*Rosamund.* Be friends with him again — I do beseech thee.

*Henry.* With Becket? I have but one hour with thee —

Sceptre and crozier clashing, and the mitre

Grappling the crown — and when I flee from this

For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-while

To rest upon thy bosom and forget him —

Why thou, my bird, thou pipest 'Becket, Becket' —

Yea, thou my golden dream of Love's own bower,

Must be the nightmare breaking on my peace

With 'Becket.'

*Rosamund.* O my life's life, not to smile

Is all but death to me. My sun, no cloud!

Let there not be one frown in this one hour.

Out of the many thine, let this be mine!

Look rather thou all-royal as when first

I met thee.

*Henry.* Where was that?

*Rosamund.* Forgetting that Forgets me too.

*Henry.* Nay, I remember it well. There on the moors.

*Rosamund.* And in a narrow path. A plover flew before thee. Then I saw

Thy high black steed among the flaming furze,

Like sudden light in the main glare of day.

And from that height something was said to me,

I knew not what.

*Henry.* I ask'd the way.

*Rosamund.* I think so. So I lost mine.

*Henry.* Thou wast too shamed to answer.

*Rosamund.* Too scared — so young!

*Henry.* The rosebud of my rose! — Well, well, no more of him — I have sent his folk,

His kin, all his belongings, overseas;

Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers — all

By hundreds to him—there to beg,  
starve, die—  
So that the fool King Louis feed  
them not.

The man shall feel that I can strike  
him yet.

*Rosamund.* Babes, orphans, mothers!  
is that royal, sire?

*Henry.* And I have been as royal  
with the Church.

He shelter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny,  
There wore his time studying the  
canon law

To work it against me. But since he  
cursed

My friends at Veselay, I have let  
them know

That if they keep him longer as their  
guest,

I scatter all their crows to all the hells.  
*Rosamund.* And is that altogether  
royal?

*Henry.* Traitor!

*Rosamund.* A faithful traitress to  
thy royal fame.

*Henry.* Fame! what care I for  
fame? Spite, ignorance, envy,  
Yea, honesty too, paint her what way  
they will,

Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;  
Infamy of to-day is fame to-mor-  
row;

And round and round again. What  
matters? Royal—

I mean to leave the royalty of my  
crown

Unless'd to mine heirs.

*Rosamund.* Still—thy fame too;  
I say that should be royal.

*Henry.* And I say,  
I care not for thy saying.

*Rosamund.* And I say,  
I care not for thy saying. A greater  
King

Than thou art, Love, who cares not  
for the word,

Makes 'care not'—care. There have  
I spoken true?

*Henry.* Care dwell with me for  
ever when I cease

To care for thee as ever!

*Rosamund.* No need! no need! . . .  
There is a bench. Come, wilt thou  
sit?—My bank

Of wild-flowers [*he sits*]. At thy feet!  
[*She sits at his feet.*]

*Henry.* I bade them clear  
A royal pleasure for thee, in the  
wood,

Not leave these country-folk at court.

*Rosamund.* I brought them  
In from the wood, and set them here.

I love them

More than the garden flowers, that  
seem at most

Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not  
half speaking

The language of the land. I love  
them too,

Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all  
the roses—

Shame fall on those who gave it a  
dog's name!—

This wild one (*picking a briar-rose*)—  
nay, I shall not prick myself—

Is sweetest. Do but smell!

*Henry.* Thou rose of the world!  
Thou rose of all the roses! [*Muttering.*]

I am not worthy of her—this beast-  
body

That God has plunged my soul in—  
I, that taking

The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so  
long

Have wander'd among women,—a  
foul stream

Thro' fever-breeding levels,—at her  
side,

Among these happy dales, run clearer,  
drop

The mud I carried, like yon brook,  
and glass

The faithful face of heaven—

[*Looking at her, and unconsciously  
aloud,*

—thine! thine!

*Rosamund.* I know it.

*Henry (muttering).* Not hers. We  
have but one bond, her hate of  
Becket.

*Rosamund (half hearing).* Nay! nay!  
what art thou muttering? I  
hate Becket?

*Henry (muttering).* A sane and nat-  
ural loathing for a soul

Purer, and truer and nobler than her-  
self;

And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate,  
A bastard hate born of a former  
love.

*Rosamund.* My fault to name him!  
O, let the hand of one

To whom thy voice is all her music  
stay it

But for a breath!

[*Puts her hand before his lips.*

Speak only of thy love.

Why, there—like some loud beggar  
at thy gate

The happy boldness of this hand hath  
won it—

Love's alms, thy kiss (*looking at her  
hand*)—Sacred! I'll kiss it too.

[*Kissing it.*

There! wherefore dost thou so peruse  
it? Nay,

There may be crosses in my line of  
life.

*Henry.* Not half *her* hand—no hand  
to mate with *her*, 100

If it should come to that.

*Rosamund.* With *her*? with whom?

*Henry.* Life on the hand is naked  
gipsy-stuff;

Life on the face, the brows—clear  
innocence!

Vein'd marble—not a furrow yet—  
and hers [*Muttering.*

Croft and recroft, a venomous spider's  
web—

• *Rosamund* (*springing up*). Out of  
the cloud, my Sun—out of the  
eclipse

Narrowing my golden hour!

*Henry.* O *Rosamund*,  
I would be true—would tell thee all  
—and something

I had to say—I love thee none the  
less— 109

Which will so vex thee.

*Rosamund.* Something against *me*?

*Henry.* No, no, against myself.

*Rosamund.* I will not hear it.

Come, come, mine hour! I bargain  
for mine hour.

I'll call thee little *Geoffrey*.

*Henry.* Call him!

*Rosamund.* *Geoffrey*!

*Enter GEOFFREY.*

*Henry.* How the boy grows!

*Rosamund.* Ay, and his brows are  
thine;

The mouth is only *Clifford*, my dear  
father.

*Geoffrey.* My liege, what hast thou  
brought me?

*Henry.* Venal imp!

What say'st thou to the Chancellor-  
ship of England?

*Geoffrey.* O, yes, my liege.

*Henry.* 'O, yes, my liege!' He  
speaks

As if it were a cake of gingerbread.

Dost thou know, my boy, what it is  
to be Chancellor of England? 121

*Geoffrey.* Something good, or thou  
wouldst not give it me.

*Henry.* It is, my boy, to side with  
the King when Chancellor, and then to  
be made archbishop and go against  
the King who made him, and turn the  
world upside down.

*Geoffrey.* I won't have it then. Nay,  
but give it me, and I promise thee not  
to turn the world upside down. 131

*Henry* (*giving him a ball*). Here is  
a ball, my boy, thy world, to turn any  
way and play with as thou wilt—  
which is more than I can do with  
mine. Go try it, play.

[*Exit Geoffrey.*

A pretty lusty boy.

*Rosamund.* So like to thee;  
Like to be liker.

*Henry.* Not in my chin, I hope!  
That threatens double.

*Rosamund.* Thou art manlike per-  
fect.

*Henry.* Ay, ay, no doubt; and  
were I humpt behind, 140  
Thou'dst say as much—the goodly  
way of women

Who love, for which I love them.  
May God grant

No ill befall or him or thee when I  
Am gone!

*Rosamund.* Is *he* thy enemy?

*Henry.* He? who? ay!

*Rosamund.* Thine enemy knows  
the secret of my bower.

*Henry.* And I could tear him asun-  
der with wild horses  
Before he would betray it. Nay—no  
fear!

More like is he to excommunicate me.

*Rosamund.* And I would creep,  
crawl over knife-edge flint

Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay  
his hand 150

Before he flash'd the bolt.

*Henry.* And when he flash'd it  
Shrink from me, like a daughter of  
the Church.

*Rosamund.* Ay, but he will not.

*Henry.* Ay! but if he did?

*Rosamund.* O, then! O, then! I almost fear to say  
That my poor heretic heart would ex-communicate  
His excommunication, clinging to thee  
Closer than ever.

*Henry (raising Rosamund and kissing her).* My brave-hearted  
Rose!

Hath he ever been to see thee?

*Rosamund.* Here? not he.  
And it is so lonely here — no confessor.

*Henry.* Thou shalt confess all thy  
sweet sins to me. 160

*Rosamund.* Besides, we came away  
in such a heat,  
I brought not even my crucifix.

*Henry.* Take this.  
[Giving her the Crucifix which  
Eleanor gave him.]

*Rosamund.* O, beautiful! May I  
have it as mine, till mine  
Be mine again?

*Henry (throwing it round her neck).*  
Thine — as I am — till death!

*Rosamund.* Death? no! I'll have  
it with me in my shroud,  
And wake with it, and show it to all  
the Saints.

*Henry.* Nay — I must go; but  
when thou layest thy lip  
To this, remembering One who died  
for thee,  
Remember also one who lives for  
thee

Out there in France; for I must hence  
to brave 170  
The Pope, King Louis, and this tur-  
bulent priest.

*Rosamund (kneeling).* O, by thy  
love for me, all mine for thee,  
Fling not thy soul into the flames of  
hell!  
I kneel to thee — be friends with him  
again.

*Henry.* Look, look! if little Geof-  
frey have not tost  
His ball into the brook! makes after  
it too

To find it. Why, the child will drown  
himself.

*Rosamund.* Geoffrey! Geoffrey!  
[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

## MONTMIRAIL

'The Meeting of the Kings.' JOHN OF  
OXFORD AND HENRY. *Crowd in the  
distance.*

*John of Oxford.* You have not  
crown'd young Henry yet, my  
liege?

*Henry.* Crown'd! by God's eyes, we  
will not have him crown'd.  
I spoke of late to the boy, he answer'd  
me,

As if he wore the crown already — No,  
We will not have him crown'd.

'Tis true what Becket told me, that  
the mother  
Would make him play his kingship  
against mine.

*John of Oxford.* Not have him  
crown'd?

*Henry.* Not now — not yet! and  
Becket —  
Becket should crown him were he  
crown'd at all;

But, since we would be lord of our  
own manor, 10  
This Canterbury, like a wounded  
deer,

Has fled our presence and our feeding-  
grounds.

*John of Oxford.* Cannot a smooth  
tongue lick him whole again  
To serve your will?

*Henry.* He hates my will, not me.

*John of Oxford.* There's York, my  
liege.

*Henry.* But England scarce would  
hold  
Young Henry king, if only crown'd  
by York,

And that would stilt up York to twice  
himself.

There is a movement yonder in the  
crowd —

See if our pious — what shall I call  
him, John? —

Husband-in-law, or smooth-shorn su-  
zerain, 20

Be yet within the field.

*John of Oxford.* I will. [*Exit.*]

*Henry.* Ay! Ay!  
Mince and go back! his politic Holi-  
ness



Hath all but climb'd the Roman perch  
again,  
And we shall hear him presently with  
clapt wing  
Crowd over Barbarossa—at last tongue-  
free  
To blast my realms with excommuni-  
cation  
And interdict. I must patch up a  
peace—  
A peace in this long-tugged-at, thread-  
bare-worn  
Quarrel of Crown and Church—to  
rend again.  
His Holiness cannot steer straight  
thro' shoals,  
Nor I. The citizen's heir hath con-  
quer'd me  
For the moment. So we make our  
peace with him.

*Enter Louis.*

Brother of France, what shall be done  
with Becket?

*Louis.* The Holy Thomas! Bro-  
ther, you have traffick'd  
Between the Emperor and the Pope,  
between  
The Pope and Antipope—a perilous  
game  
For men to play with God.

*Henry.* Ay, ay, good brother,  
They call you the Monk-King.

*Louis.* Who calls me? she  
That was my wife, now yours? You  
have her Duchy,  
The point you aim'd at, and pray God  
she prove  
True wife to you. You have had the  
better of us  
In secular matters.

*Henry.* Come, confess, good bro-  
ther,  
You did your best or worst to keep  
her Duchy.  
Only the golden Leopard printed in  
it  
Such hold-fast claws that you per-  
force again  
Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did  
we convene  
This conference but to babble of our  
wives?

They are plagues enough in-door.

*Louis.* We fought in the East,  
And felt the sun of Antioch scald our  
mail,

And push'd our lances into Saracen  
hearts.

We never hounded on the State at  
home

To spoil the Church.

*Henry.* How should you see this  
rightly?

*Louis.* Well, well, no more! I  
am proud of my 'Monk-King,'  
Whoever named me; and, brother,  
Holy Church

May rock, but will not wreck, nor our  
archbishop

Stagger on the slope decks for any  
rough sea

Blown by the breath of kings. We  
do forgive you

For aught you wrought against us.

[*Henry holds up his hand.*

Nay, I pray you,  
Do not defend yourself. You will do  
much

To rake out all old dying heats if you,  
At my requesting, will but look into  
The wrongs you did him, and restore  
his kin,

Reseat him on his throne of Canter-  
bury,

Be, both, the friends you were.

*Henry.* The friends we were!  
Co-mates we were, and had our sport  
together.

Co-kings we were, and made the laws  
together.

The world had never seen the like  
before.

You are too cold to know the fashion  
of it.

Well, well, we will be gentle with him,  
gracious—

Most gracious.

*Enter BECKET, after him, JOHN OF  
OXFORD, ROGER OF YORK, GIL-  
BERT FOLIOT, DE BROU, FITZURSE,  
etc.*

Only that the rift he made  
May close between us, here I am  
wholly king,

The word should come from him.

*Becket (kneeling).* Then, my dear  
liege,

I here deliver all this controversy  
Into your royal hands.

*Henry.* Ah, Thomas, Thomas,  
Thou art thyself again, Thomas again.

*Becket (rising).* Saving God's honor

*Henry.* Out upon thee, man!  
Saving the devil's honor, his yes and  
no.

Knights, bishops, earls, this London  
spawn — by Mahound,  
I had sooner have been born a Mussul-  
man —

Less clashing with their priests — so  
I am half-way down the slope — will  
no man stay me?

I dash myself to pieces — I stay my-  
self —

Puff — it is gone. You, Master  
Becket, you

That owe to me your power over me —  
Nay, nay —

Brother of France, you have taken,  
cherish'd him

Who thief-like fled from his own  
church by night,

No man pursuing. I would have had  
him back.

Take heed he do not turn and rend  
you too:

For whatsoever may displease him —  
that

Is clean against God's honor — a shift,  
a trick

Whereby to challenge, face me out of  
all

My regal rights. Yet, yet — that none  
may dream

I go against God's honor — ay, or him-  
self

In any reason, choose

A hundred of the wisest heads from  
England,

A hundred, too, from Normandy and  
Anjou;

Let these decide on what was custom-  
ary

In olden days, and all the Church of  
France

Decide on their decision, I am con-  
tent.

More, what the mightiest and the ho-  
liest

Of all his predecessors may have done  
Even to the least and meanest of my  
own,

Let him do the same to me — I am  
content.

*Louis.* Ay, ay! the King humbles  
himself enough.

*Becket (aside).* Words! he will wrig-  
gle out of them like an eel

When the time serves. (*Aloud.*) My  
lieges and my lords,  
The thanks of Holy Church are due to  
those

That went before us for their work,  
which we

Inheriting reap an easier harvest.  
Yet —

*Louis.* My lord, will you be greater  
than the Saints,

More than Saint Peter? whom — what  
is it you doubt?

Behold your peace at hand.

*Becket.* I say that those  
Who went before us did not wholly  
clear

The deadly growths of earth, which  
hell's own heat

So dwell on that they rose and dark-  
en'd heaven.

Yet they did much. Would God they  
had torn up all

By the hard root, which shoots again;  
our trial

Had so been less; but, seeing they  
were men

Defective or excessive, must we fol-  
low

All that they overdid or underdid?  
Nay, if they were defective as Saint  
Peter

Denying Christ, who yet defied the  
tyrant,

We hold by his defiance, not his de-  
fect.

O good son Louis, do not counsel me,  
No, to suppress God's honor for the  
sake

Of any king that breathes. No, God  
forbid!

*Henry.* No! God forbid! and turn  
me Mussulman!

No God but one, and Mahound is his  
prophet.

But for your Christian, look you, you  
shall have

None other God but me — me, Thomas,  
son

Of Gilbert Becket, London merchant.  
Out!

I hear no more. [*Exit.*]  
*Louis.* Our brother's anger puts him,  
Poor man, beside himself — not wise.

My lord,  
We have clapt your cause, believing  
that our brother

Had wrong'd you; but this day he  
proffer'd peace.

You will have war; and tho' we grant  
the Church

King over this world's kings, yet, my  
good lord,

We that are kings are something in  
this world,

And so we pray you, draw yourself  
from under 140

The wings of France. We shelter you  
no more. [Exit.]

*John of Oxford.* I am glad that  
France hath scouted him at last.

I told the Pope what manner of man  
he was. [Exit.]

*Roger of York.* Yea, since he flouts  
the will of either realm,

Let either cast him away like a dead  
dog! [Exit.]

*Foliot.* Yea, let a stranger spoil his  
heritage,

And let another take his bishopric!  
[Exit.]

*De Broc.* Our castle, my lord, be-  
longs to Canterbury.

[pray you come and take it. [Exit.]

*Fitzurse.* When you will.  
[Exit.]

*Becket.* Cursed be John of Oxford,  
Roger of York, 150

And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De  
Brocs

That hold our Saltwood Castle from  
our see!

Cursed Fitzurse, and all therest of them  
That sow this hate between my lord  
and me!

*Voices from the Crowd.* Blessed be  
the lord archbishop, who hath with-  
stood two kings to their faces for the  
honor of God.

*Becket.* Out of the mouths of babes  
and sucklings, praise!

I thank you, sons; when kings but  
hold by crowns, 160

The crowd that hungers for a crown  
in heaven

Is my true king.

*Herbert.* Thy true King bade thee be  
A fisher of men; thou hast them in  
thy net.

*Becket.* I am too like the King here;  
both of us

Too headlong for our office. Better  
have been

A fisherman at Bosham, my good Her-  
bert,

Thy birthplace — the sea-creek — the  
petty rill

That falls into it — the green field —  
the gray church —

The simple lobster-basket, and the  
mesh —

The more or less of daily labor done —  
The pretty gaping bills in the home-  
nest 171

Piping for bread — the daily want  
supplied —

The daily pleasure to supply it.

*Herbert.* Ah, Thomas,  
You had not borne it, no, not for a  
day.

*Becket.* Well, maybe, no.

*Herbert.* But bear with Walter Map,  
For here he comes to comment on the  
time.

*Enter WALTER MAP.*

*Walter Map.* Pity, my lord, that you  
have quenched the warmth of France  
toward you, tho' His Holiness, after  
much smouldering and smoking, be  
kindled again upon your quarter. 181

*Becket.* Ay, if he do not end in smoke  
again.

*Walter Map.* My lord, the fire, when  
first kindled, said to the smoke, 'Go  
up, my son, straight to heaven.' And  
the smoke said, 'I go;' but anon the  
Northeast took and turned him South-  
west, then the Southwest turned him  
Northeast, and so of the other winds;  
but it was in him to go up straight if  
the time had been quieter. Your lord-  
ship affects the unwavering perpen-  
dicular; but His Holiness, pushed one  
way by the Empire and another by  
England, if he move at all — Heaven  
stay him! — is fain to diagonalize.

*Herbert.* Diagonalize! thou art a  
wordmonger.

Our Thomas never will diagonalize.  
Thou art a jester and a verse-maker.  
Diagonalize! 200

*Walter Map.* Is the world any the  
worse for my verses if the Latin  
rhymes be rolled out from a full  
mouth? or any harm done to the peo-  
ple if my jest be in defense of the  
Truth?

*Becket.* Ay, if the jest be so done  
that the people

Delight to wallow in the grossness of it,

Till Truth herself be shamed of her defender.

*Non defensoribus istis*, Walter Map! <sup>209</sup>

*Walter Map*. Is that my case? so if the city be sick, and I cannot call the kennel sweet, your lordship would suspend me from verse writing, as you suspended yourself after sub-writing to the customs.

*Becket*. I pray God pardon mine infirmity! <sup>217</sup>

*Walter Map*. Nay, my lord, take heart; for tho' you suspended yourself, the Pope let you down again; and tho' you suspend Foliot or another, the Pope will not leave them in suspense, for the Pope himself is always in suspense, like Mahound's coffin hung between heaven and earth — always in suspense, like the scales, till the weight of Germany or the gold of England brings one of them down to the dust — always in suspense, like the tail of the horologe — to and fro — tick-tack — we make the time, we keep the time, ay, and we serve the time; for I have heard say that if you boxed the Pope's ears with a purse, you might stagger him, but he would pocket the purse. No saying of mine — Jocelyn of Salisbury. But the King hath bought half the College of Red-hats. He warmed to you to-day, and you have chilled him again. Yet you both love God. Agree with him quickly again, even for the sake of the Church. My one grain of good counsel which you will not swallow. I hate a split between old friendships as I hate the dirty gap in the face of a Cistercian monk, that will swallow anything. Farewell. [*Exit*.]

*Becket*. Map scoffs at Rome. I all but hold with Map.

Save for myself no Rome were left in England, <sup>250</sup>

All had been his. Why should this Rome, this Rome,

Still choose Barabbas rather than the Christ,

Absolve the left-hand thief and damn the right?

Take fees of tyranny, wink at sacrilege,

Which even Peter had not dared? condemn

The blameless exile? —

*Herbert*. Thee, thou holy Thomas! I would that thou hadst been the Holy Father.

*Becket*. I would have done my most to keep Rome holy, I would have made Rome know she still is Rome —

Who stands aghast at her eternal self And shakes at mortal kings — her vacillation, <sup>261</sup>

Avarice, craft — O God, how many an innocent

Has left his bones upon the way to Rome

Unwept, uncared for! Yea — on mine own self

The King had had no power except for Rome.

'Tis not the King who is guilty of mine exile,

But Rome, Rome, Rome!

*Herbert*. My lord, I see this Louis Returning, ah! to drive thee from his realm.

*Becket*. He said as much before. Thou art no prophet,

Nor yet a prophet's son.

*Herbert*. Whatever he say, Deny not thou God's honor for a king. <sup>271</sup>

The King looks troubled.

*Re-enter KING LOUIS.*

*Louis*. My dear lord archbishop, I learn but now that those poor Poitevins

That in thy cause were stirr'd against King Henry

Have been, despite his kingly promise given

To our own self of pardon, evilly used

And put to pain. I have lost all trust in him.

The Church alone hath eyes — and now I see

That I was blind — suffer the phrase — surrendering

God's honor to the pleasure of a man. <sup>280</sup>

Forgive me and absolve me, holy father. [*Kneels*.]

*Becket*. Son, I absolve thee in the name of God.

*Louis (rising).* Return to Sens, where we will care for you.  
The wine and wealth of all our France are yours;

Rest in our realm, and be at peace with all. [*Exeunt.*]

*Voices from the Crowd.* Long live the good King Louis! God bless the great archbishop!

*Re-enter HENRY and JOHN OF OXFORD.*

*Henry (looking after King Louis and Becket).* Ay, there they go—both backs are turn'd to me—  
Why, then I strike into my former path

For England, crown young Henry there, and make  
Our waning Eleanor all but love me!

*John.*  
Thou hast served me heretofore with Rome—and well.

They call thee John the Swearer.

*John of Oxford.* For this reason, That, being ever duteous to the King, I evermore have sworn upon his side,

And ever mean to do it.

*Henry (claps him on the shoulder).*  
*Honest John!*  
To Rome again! the storm begins again.

Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with our coins,

Threaten our junction with the Emperor—flatter

And fright the Pope—bribe all the cardinals—leave

Lateran and Vatican in one dust of gold—

Swear and unswear, state and misstate thy best!

I go to have young Henry crown'd by York.

### ACT III

#### SCENE I.—THE BOWER

HENRY and ROSAMUND.

*Henry.* All that you say is just. I cannot answer it  
Till better times, when I shall put away—

*Rosamund.* What will you put away?

*Henry.* That which you ask me  
Till better times. Let it content you now

There is no woman that I love so well.

*Rosamund.* No woman but should be content with that—

*Henry.* And one fair child to fondle!

*Rosamund.* O, yes, the child  
We waited for so long—Heaven's gift at last—

And how you doted on him then!  
To-day

I almost fear'd your kiss was colder—  
yes—

But then the child is such a child!  
What chance

That he should ever spread into the man

Here in our silence? I have done my best.

I am not learn'd.

*Henry.* I am the King, his father, And I will look to it. Is our secret ours?

Have you had any alarm? no stranger?

*Rosamund.* No.  
The warder of the bower hath given himself

Of late to wine. I sometimes think he sleeps

When he should watch; and yet what fear? the people

Believe the wood enchanted. No one comes,

Nor foe nor friend; his fond excess of wine

Springs from the loneliness of my poor bower,

Which weighs even on me.

*Henry.* Yet these tree-towers, Their long bird-echoing minster-aisles,—the voice

Of the perpetual brook, these golden slopes

Of Solomon-shaming flowers—that was your saying,

All pleased you so at first.

*Rosamund.* Not now so much. My Anjou bower was scarce as beautiful.

But you were oftener there. I have none but you.

The brook's voice is not yours, and no  
flower, not

The sun himself, should he be changed  
to one,

Could shine away the darkness of that  
gap

Left by the lack of love.

*Henry.* The lack of love !

*Rosamund.* Of one we love. Nay,

I would not be bold,

Yet hoped ere this you might —

[*Looks earnestly at him.*]

*Henry.* Anything further ?

*Rosamund.* Only my best bower-  
maiden died of late,

And that old priest whom John of  
Salisbury trusted

Hath sent another.

*Henry.* Secret ?

*Rosamund.* I but ask'd her

One question, and she primm'd her  
mouth and put

Her hands together — thus — and said,  
God help her,

That she was sworn to silence.

*Henry.* What did you ask her ?

*Rosamund.* Some daily something-  
nothing.

*Henry.* Secret, then ?

*Rosamund.* I do not love her. Must  
you go, my liege,

So suddenly ?

*Henry.* I came to England sud-  
denly,

And on a great occasion sure to wake  
As great a wrath in Becket —

*Rosamund.* Always Becket !  
He always comes between us.

*Henry.* And to meet it  
I needs must leave as suddenly. It is  
raining.

Put on your hood and see me to the  
bounds.

[*Exeunt.*]

MARGERY (*singing behind scene*).

Babble in bower

Under the rose !

Bee must n't buzz,

Whoop — but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,

Nobody near !

Grasshopper, grasshopper,

Whoop — you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,

Tit on the tree !

Bird must n't tell,

Whoop — he can see.

*Enter MARGERY.*

I ha' been but a week here and I ha'  
seen what I ha' seen, for to be sure it's  
no more than a week since our old  
Father Philip that has confessed our  
mother for twenty years, and she was  
hard put to it, and to speak truth,  
nigh at the end of our last crust, and  
that mouldy, and she cried out on him  
to put me forth in the world and to  
make me a woman of the world, and  
to win my own bread, whereupon he  
asked our mother if I could keep a  
quiet tongue i' my head, and not  
speak till I was spoke to, and I an-  
swered for myself that I never spoke  
more than was needed, and he told me  
he would advance me to the service of  
a great lady, and took me ever so far  
away, and gave me a great pat o' the  
cheek for a pretty wench, and said it  
was a pity to blindfold such eyes as  
mine, and such to be sure they be, but  
he blinded 'em for all that, and so  
brought me no-hows as I may say, and  
the more shame to him after his pro-  
mise, into a garden and not into the  
world, and bade me whatever I saw  
not to speak one word, an' it 'ud be  
well for me in the end, for there were  
great ones who would look after me,  
and to be sure I ha' seen great ones  
to-day — and then not to speak one  
word, for that's the rule o' the garden,  
tho' to be sure if I had been Eve i'  
the garden I should n't ha' minded the  
apple, for what's an apple, you know  
save to a child, and I'm no child, but  
more a woman o' the world than my  
lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha'  
seen — tho' to be sure if I had n't  
minded it we should all on us ha' had  
to go, bless the Saints, w' bare backs,  
but the backs 'ud ha' countenanced  
one another, and belike it 'ud ha' been  
always summer, and anyhow I am as  
well-shaped as my lady here, and I  
ha' seen what I ha' seen, and what's  
the good of my talking to myself, for  
here comes my lady (*enter Rosamund*),  
and, my lady, tho' I should n't speak  
one word, I wish you joy o' the King's  
brother.

*Rosamund.* What is it you mean ?

*Margery.* I mean your goodman,  
your husband, my lady, for I saw

your ladyship a-parting wi' him even now i' the coppice, when I was a-getting o' bluebells for your ladyship's nose to smell on — and I ha' seen the King once at Oxford, and he's as like the King as fingernail to fingernail, and I thought at first it was the King, only you know the King's married, for King Louis — 125

*Rosamund.* Married!

*Margery.* Years and years, my lady, for her husband, King Louis —

*Rosamund.* Hush!

*Margery.* And I thought if it were the King's brother he had a better bride than the King, for the people do say that his is bad beyond all reckoning, and —

*Rosamund.* The people lie. 135

*Margery.* Very like, my lady, but most on 'em know an honest woman and a lady when they see her, and besides they say she makes songs, and that's against her, for I never knew an honest woman that could make songs, tho' to be sure our mother 'll sing me old songs by the hour, but then, God help her, she had 'em from her mother, and her mother from her mother back and back for ever so long, but none on 'em ever made songs, and they were all honest.

*Rosamund.* Go, you shall tell me of her some other time. 151

*Margery.* There's none so much to tell on her, my lady, only she kept the seventh commandment better than some I know on, or I could n't look your ladyship i' the face, and she brew'd the best ale in all Glo'ster, that is to say in her time when she had the 'Crown.'

*Rosamund.* The crown! who? 160

*Margery.* Mother.

*Rosamund.* I mean her whom you call — fancy — my husband's brother's wife.

*Margery.* O, Queen Eleanor. Yes, my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to speak a word, I can tell you all about her, if —

*Rosamund.* No word now. I am faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay — go. What! will you anger me?

[Exit Margery.]

He charged me not to question any of those 172

About me. Have I? no! she question'd me.

Did she not slander him? Should she stay here?

May she not tempt me, being at my side,

To question her? Nay, can I send her hence

Without his kingly leave? I am in the dark.

I have lived, poor bird, from cage to cage, and known

Nothing but him — happy to know no more,

So that he loved me — and he loves me — yes, 180

And bound me by his love to secrecy Till his own time.

Eleanor, Eleanor, have I Not heard ill things of her in France? O, she's

The Queen of France. I see it — some confusion,

Some strange mistake. I did not hear aright,

Myself confused with parting from the King.

MARGERY (behind scene).

Bee must n't buzz,  
Whoop — but he knows.

*Rosamund.* Yet her — what her? he hinted of some her —

When he was here before — 190  
Something that would displease me.

Hath he stray'd  
From love's clear path into the common bush,

And, being scratch'd, returns to his true rose,

Who hath not thorn enough to prick him for it,

Even with a word?

MARGERY (behind scene).

Bird must n't tell,  
Whoop — he can see.

*Rosamund.* I would not hear him  
Nay — there's more — he frown'd

'No mate for her, if it should come to that' —

To that — to what?

MARGERY (*behind scene*).

Whoop — but he knows,  
Whoop — but he knows.

*Rosamund.* O God! some dreadful  
truth is breaking on me —  
Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

*Enter GEOFFREY.*

*Geoffrey!* What are you crying for,  
when the sun shines?

*Rosamund.* Hath not thy father  
left us to ourselves?

*Geoffrey.* Ay, but he's taken the  
rain with him. I hear Margery: I'll  
go play with her. [*Exit* Geoffrey.]

ROSAMUND.

Rainbow, stay, 210  
Gleam upon gloom,  
Bright as my dream,  
Rainbow, stay!  
But it passes away,  
Gloom upon gleam,  
Dark as my doom —  
O rainbow, stay!

## SCENE II

OUTSIDE THE WOODS NEAR ROSA-  
MUND'S BOWER

ELEANOR. FITZURSE.

*Eleanor.* Up from the salt lips of  
the land we two  
Have track'd the King to this dark  
inland wood;  
And somewhere hereabouts he van-  
ish'd. Here  
His turtle builds; his exit is our adit.  
Watch! he will out again, and pre-  
sently,  
Seeing he must to Westminster and  
crown

Young Henry there to-morrow.

*Fitzurse.* We have watch'd  
So long in vain, he hath pass'd out  
again,  
And on the other side.

[*A great horn winded.*  
Hark! Madam!

*Eleanor.* Ay,  
How ghostly sounds that horn in the  
black wood! 10

[*A countryman flying.*

Whither away, man? what are you  
flying from?

*Countryman.* The witch! the witch!  
she sits naked by a great heap of gold  
in the middle of the wood, and when  
the horn sounds she comes out as a  
wolf. Get you hence! a man passed  
in there to-day. I holla'd to him, but  
he didn't hear me; he'll never out  
again, the witch has got him. I  
daren't stay — I dare n't stay! 20

*Eleanor.* Kind of the witch to give  
thee warning, tho'. [*Man flies.*  
Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's  
fear

Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd  
the King?

[*Horn sounded.* *Another flying.*

*Fitzurse.* Again! stay, fool, and  
tell me why thou fliest.

*Countryman.* Fly thou too. The  
King keeps his forest head of game  
here, and when that horn sounds a  
score of wolf-dogs are let loose that  
will tear thee piecemeal. Linger not  
till the third horn. Fly! [*Exit.*

*Eleanor.* This is the likelier tale.

We have hit the place. 31  
Now let the King's fine game look to  
itself. [*Horn.*

*Fitzurse.* Again! —

And far on in the dark heart of the  
wood  
I hear the yelping of the hounds of  
hell.

*Eleanor.* I have my dagger here to  
still their throats.

*Fitzurse.* Nay, madam, not to-night  
— the night is falling.

What can be done to-night?

*Eleanor.* Well — well — away.

## SCENE III

TRAITOR'S MEADOW AT FRÉTEVAL.  
PAVILIONS AND TENTS OF THE  
ENGLISH AND FRENCH BARONAGE

BECKET and HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

*Becket.* See here!

*Herbert.* What's here?

*Becket.* A notice from the priest  
To whom our John of Salisbury com-  
mitted



The secret of the bower, that our  
wolf-Queen

Is prowling round the fold. I should  
be back

In England even for this.

*Herbert.* These are by-things  
In the great cause.

*Becket.* The by-things of the Lord  
Are the wrong'd innocences that will  
cry

From all the hidden by-ways of the  
world

In the great day against the wronger.

I know

Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all, be-  
fore 10

The Church should suffer wrong!

*Herbert.* Do you see, my lord,  
There is the King talking with Walter  
Map?

*Becket.* He hath the Pope's last let-  
ters, and they threaten  
The immediate thunder-blast of inter-  
dict;

Yet he can scarce be touching upon  
those,

Or scarce would smile that fashion.

*Herbert.* Winter sunshine!  
Beware of opening out thy bosom to  
it,

Lest thou, myself, and all thy flock  
should catch

An after ague-fit of trembling. Look!  
He bows, he bares his head, he is  
coming hither. 20

Still with a smile.

*Enter KING HENRY and WALTER  
MAP.*

*Henry.* We have had so many hours  
together, Thomas,  
So many happy hours alone together,  
That I would speak with you once  
more alone.

*Becket.* My liege, your will and  
happiness are mine.

[*Exeunt King and Becket.*]

*Herbert.* The same smile still.

*Walter Map.* Do you see that great  
black cloud that hath come over the  
sun and cast us all into shadow?

*Herbert.* And feel it too. 30

*Walter Map.* And see you yon side-  
beam that is forced from under it, and  
sets the church-tower over there all  
a-hell-fire as it were?

*Herbert.* Ay.

*Walter Map.* It is this black, bell-  
silencing, anti-marrying, burial-hin-  
dering interdict that hath squeezed  
out this side-smile upon Canterbury,  
whereof may come conflagration.  
Were I Thomas, I would n't trust it.  
Sudden change is a house on sand;  
and tho' I count Henry honest enough,  
yet when fear creeps in at the front,  
honesty steals out at the back, and  
the King at last is fairly scared by  
this cloud—this interdict. I have  
been more for the King than the  
Church in this matter—yea, even for  
the sake of the Church; for, truly, as  
the case stood, you had safer have  
slain an archbishop than a she-goat.  
But our recoverer and upholder of  
customs hath in this crowning of  
young Henry by York and London so  
violated the immemorial usage of the  
Church, that, like the grave-digger's  
child I have heard of, trying to ring  
the bell, he hath half-hanged himself  
in the rope of the Church, or rather  
pulled all the Church with the Holy  
Father astride of it down upon his  
own head. 63

*Herbert.* Were you there?

*Walter Map.* In the church rope?  
—no. I was at the crowning, for I  
have pleasure in the pleasure of  
crowds, and to read the faces of men  
at a great show.

*Herbert.* And how did Roger of  
York comport himself? 71

*Walter Map.* As magnificently and  
archiepiscopally as our Thomas would  
have done: only there was a dare-  
devil in his eye—I should say a dare-  
Becket. He thought less of two kings  
than of one Roger, the king of the oc-  
casion. Foliot is the holier man, per-  
haps the better. Once or twice there  
ran a twitch across his face, as who  
should say 'what's to follow?' but  
Salisbury was a calf cowed by Mother  
Church, and every now and then  
glancing about him like a thief at  
night when he hears a door open in  
the house and thinks 'the master.' 86

*Herbert.* And the father-king?

*Walter Map.* The father's eye was  
so tender it would have called a goose  
off the green, and once he strove to  
hide his face, like the Greek king

when his daughter was sacrificed, but he thought better of it. It was but the sacrifice of a kingdom to his son, a smaller matter; but as to the young crowning himself, he looked so malapert in the eyes, that had I fathered him I had given him more of the rod than the sceptre. Then followed the thunder of the captains and the shouting, and so we came on to the banquet, from whence there puffed out such an incense of unctuousity into the nostrils of our Gods of Church and State, that Lucullus or Apicius might have sniffed it in their Hades of heathenism, so that the smell of their own roast had not come across it—<sup>108</sup>

*Herbert.* Map, tho' you make your butt too big, you overshoot it.

*Walter Map.* For as to the fish, they de-miracled the miraculous draught, and might have sunk a navy—

*Herbert.* There again, Goliassing and Goliathizing!

*Walter Map.* And as for the flesh at table, a whole Peter's sheet, with all manner of game, and four-footed things, and fowls—

*Herbert.* And all manner of creeping things too? <sup>121</sup>

*Walter Map.* Well, there were abbots—but they did not bring their women; and so we were dull enough at first, but in the end we flourished out into a merriment; for the old King would act servitor and hand a dish to his son; whereupon my Lord of York—his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in it than the backward scrape of the clown's heel—'great honor,' says he, 'from the King's self to the King's son.' Did you hear the young King's quip? <sup>135</sup>

*Herbert.* No, what was it?

*Walter Map.* Glancing at the days when his father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered, 'Should not an earl's son wait on a king's son?' And when the cold corners of the King's mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part childlike, to be freed from the dulness—part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a

royal necessity—part childlike again—when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves—many midriff-shaken even to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes—but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration—tho', to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lacrymation of a lamentation; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King's feet. They have made it up again—for the moment. <sup>160</sup>

*Herbert.* Thanks to the blessed Magdalene, whose day it is!

*Re-enter HENRY and BECKET.* (*During their conference the BARONS and BISHOPS OF FRANCE and ENGLAND come in at back of stage.*)

*Becket.* Ay, King! for in thy kingdom, as thou knowest,  
The spouse of the Great King, thy King, hath fallen—

The daughter of Zion lies beside the way—

The priests of Baal tread her underfoot—

The golden ornaments are stolen from her—

*Henry.* Have I not promised to restore her, Thomas,  
And send thee back again to Canterbury?

*Becket.* Send back again those exiles of my kin <sup>170</sup>  
Who wander famine-wasted thro' the world.

*Henry.* Have I not promised, man, to send them back?

*Becket.* Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken thro' the pales  
Of privilege, crowning thy young son by York,

London, and Salisbury—not Canterbury.

*Henry.* York crown'd the Conqueror—not Canterbury.

*Becket.* There was no Canterbury in William's time.

*Henry.* But Hereford, you know, crown'd the first Henry.

*Becket.* But Anselm crown'd this Henry o'er again.

*Henry.* And thou shalt crown my Henry o'er again. <sup>180</sup>

*Becket.* And is it then with thy goodwill that I Proceed against thine evil councillors, And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those Who made the second mitre play the first, And acted me?

*Henry.* Well, well, then — have thy way!

It may be they were evil councillors. What more, my lord archbishop? What more, Thomas?

I make thee full amends. Say all thy say, But blaze not out before the Frenchmen here.

*Becket.* More? Nothing, so thy promise be thy deed. <sup>190</sup>

*Henry (holding out his hand).* Give me thy hand. My Lords of France and England,

My friend of Canterbury and myself Are now once more at perfect amity. Unkingly should I be, and most un- knightly,

Not striving still, however much in vain,

To rival him in Christian charity.

*Herbert.* All praise to Heaven, and sweet Saint Magdalen!

*Henry.* And so farewell until we meet in England.

*Becket.* I fear, my liege, we may not meet in England.

*Henry.* How, do you make me a traitor?

*Becket.* No, indeed! <sup>200</sup> That be far from thee.

*Henry.* Come, stay with us, then, Before you part for England.

*Becket.* I am bound For that one hour to stay with good King Louis,

Who helpt me when none else.

*Herbert.* He said thy life Was not one hour's worth in England save

King Henry gave thee first the kiss of peace.

*Henry.* He said so? Louis, did he? look you, Herbert,

When I was in mine anger with King Louis,

I swear I would not give the kiss of peace,

Not on French ground, nor any ground but English, <sup>210</sup>

Where his cathedral stands. Mine old friend, Thomas,

I would there were that perfect trust between us,

That health of heart, once ours, ere Pope or King

Had come between us! Even now — who knows? —

I might deliver all things to thy hand — If — but I say no more — farewell, my lord.

*Becket.* Farewell, my liege!

[*Exit Henry, then the Barons and Bishops.*]

*Walter Map.* There again! when the full fruit of the royal promise might have dropt into thy mouth hadst thou but opened it to thank him. <sup>222</sup>

*Becket.* He fenced his royal promise with an *if*.

*Walter Map.* And is the King's *if* too high a stile for your lordship to overstep and come at all things in the next field?

*Becket.* Ay, if this *if* be like the devil's '*if*'

Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

*Herbert.* O, Thomas,

I could fall down and worship thee, my Thomas, <sup>230</sup>

For thou hast trodden this wine-press alone.

*Becket.* Nay, of the people there are many with me.

*Walter Map.* I am not altogether with you, my lord, tho' I am none of those that would raise a storm between you, lest ye should draw together like two ships in a calm. You wrong the King: he meant what he said to-day. Who shall vouch for his to-morrows? One word further. Doth not the *fewness* of anything make the fulness of it in estimation? Is not virtue prized mainly for its rarity and great baseness-loathed as an exception: for were all, my lord, as noble as yourself, who would look up to you? and were all as base as — who shall I say? — Fitzurse and his following — who would

look down upon them? My lord, you have put so many of the King's household out of communion, that they begin to smile at it.

*Becket.* At their peril, at their peril—

*Walter Map.* For tho' the drop may nollow out the dead stone, doth not the living skin thicken against perpetual whippings? This is the second grain of good counsel I ever proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by the rule of frequency. Have I sown it in salt? I trust not, for before God I promise you the King hath many more wolves than he can tame in his woods of England, and if it suit their purpose to howl for the King, and you still move against him, you may have no less than to die for it; but God and his free wind grant your lordship a happy home-return and the King's kiss of peace in Kent. Farewell! I must follow the King. *[Exit.]*

*Herbert.* Ay, and I warrant the customs. Did the King

*Becket.* No!—To die for it—I live to die for it, I die to live for it.

The State will die, the Church can never die.

The King's not like to die for that which dies;

But I must die for that which never dies.

It will be so—my visions in the Lord—It must be so, my friend! the wolves of England

Must murder her one shepherd, that the sheep

May feed in peace. False figure, Map would say.

Earth's falses are heaven's truths. And when my voice

Is martyr'd mute, and this man disappears,

That perfect trust may come again between us,

And there, there, there, not here I shall rejoice

To find my stray sheep back within the fold.

The crowd are scattering, let us move away!

And thence to England. *[Exeunt.]*

## ACT IV

## SCENE I.—THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE BOWER

*Geoffrey (coming out of the wood).* Light again! light again! Margery? no, that's a finer thing there. How it glitters!

*Eleanor (entering).* Come to me, little one. How camest thou hither?

*Geoffrey.* On my legs.

*Eleanor.* And mighty pretty legs too. Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

*Geoffrey.* No; I only love mother.

*Eleanor.* Ay; and who is thy mother?

*Geoffrey.* They call her—But she lives secret, you see.

*Eleanor.* Why?

*Geoffrey.* Don't know why.

*Eleanor.* Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?

*Geoffrey.* Can't tell.

*Eleanor.* What does she call him?

*Geoffrey.* My liege.

*Eleanor.* Pretty one, how camest thou?

*Geoffrey.* There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glow worm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

*Eleanor.* I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

*Geoffrey.* There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies.

*Eleanor.* She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

*Geoffrey.* But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty, like mother.

*Eleanor.* We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art—*(aside)* little hastard! Come, here is a golden chain I will give thee if thou wilt lead me to thy mother.

*Geoffrey.* No—no gold. Mother says gold spoils all. Love is the only gold.

*Eleanor.* I love thy mother, my

pretty boy. Show me where thou camest out of the wood.

*Geoffrey.* By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

*Eleanor.* Where's the warder?

*Geoffrey.* Very bad. Somebody struck him.

*Eleanor.* Ay? who was that?

*Geoffrey.* Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you'd have heard his horn before now. Come along, then; we shall see the silk here and there, and I want my supper. 63

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

### ROSAMUND'S BOWER

*Rosamund.* The boy so late; pray God, he be not lost!

I sent this Margery, and she comes not back;

I sent another, and she comes not back. I go myself—so many alleys, crossings,

Paths, avenues—nay, if I lost him, now

The folds have fallen from the mystery And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

*Enter GEOFFREY and ELEANOR.*

*Geoffrey,* the pain thou hast put me to!

[*Seeing Eleanor.*]

Ha, you!

How came you hither?

*Eleanor.* Your own child brought me hither!

*Geoffrey.* You said you couldn't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went on and on till I found the light and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

*Rosamund.* How dared you? Know you not this bower is secret, Of and belonging to the King of England,

More sacred than his forests for the chase?

Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste

Lest worse befall you.

*Eleanor.* Child, I am mine own self Of and belonging to the King. The King

Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,

Almost as many as your true Mussulman—

Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases him

To call his wives; but so it chances, child,

That I am his main paramour, his sultana.

But since the fondest pair of doves will jar,

Even in a cage of gold, we had words of late,

And thereupon he call'd my children bastards.

Do you believe that you are married to him?

*Rosamund.* I should believe it.

*Eleanor.* You must not believe it, Because I have a wholesome medicine here

Puts that belief asleep. Your answer, beauty!

Do you believe that you are married to him?

*Rosamund.* Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the ball you lost in the fork of the great willow over the brook. Go. See that you do not fall in. Go.

*Geoffrey.* And leave you alone with the good fairy. She calls you beauty, but I don't like her looks. Well, you bid me go, and I'll have my ball anyhow. Shall I find you asleep when I come back?

*Rosamund.* Go. [*Exit Geoffrey.*]

*Eleanor.* He is easily found again Do you believe it?

I pray you then to take my sleeping-draught;

But if you should not care to take it—see!

[*Draws a dagger.*]

What! have I scared the red rose from your face

Into your heart? But this will find it there,

And dig it from the root for ever.

*Rosamund.* Help! help!

*Eleanor.* They say that walls have ears; but these, it seems, Have none! and I have none—to pity thee.

*Rosamund.* I do beseech you—my child is so young,

So backward too ; I cannot leave him yet.

I am not so happy I could not die myself,

But the child is so young. You have children — his ;

And mine is the King's child ; so, if you love him —

Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong done

Somehow ; but if you do not — there are those

' Who say you do not love him — let me go

With my young boy, and I will hide my face,

Blacken and gipsyfy it ; none shall know me ;

The King shall never hear of me again, But I will beg my bread along the world

With my young boy, and God will be our guide.

I never meant you harm in any way. See, I can say no more.

*Eleanor.* Will you not say you are not married to him ?

*Rosamund.* Ay, madam, I can say it, if you will.

*Eleanor.* Then is thy pretty boy a bastard ?

*Rosamund.* No.

*Eleanor.* And thou thyself a proven wanton ?

*Rosamund.* No.

I am none such. I never loved but one.

I have heard of such that range from love to love,

Like the wild beast — if you can call it love.

I have heard of such — yea, even among those

Who sit on thrones — I never saw any such,

Never knew any such, and howsoever

You do misname me, match'd with any such,

I am snow to mud.

*Eleanor.* The more the pity then That thy true home — the heavens — cry out for thee

Who art too pure for earth.

*Enter FITZURSE.*

*Fitzurse.* Give her to me.

*Eleanor.* The Judas-lover of our passion-play

Hath track'd us hither.

*Fitzurse.* Well, why not ? I follow'd You and the child ; he babbled all the way.

Give her to me to make my honeymoon.

*Eleanor.* Ay, as the bears love honey. Could you keep her

Indungeon'd from one whisper of the wind,

Dark even from a side glance of the moon,

And oublietted in the centre — No !

I follow out my hate and thy revenge.

*Fitzurse.* You bade me take revenge another way —

To bring her to the dust. — Come with me, love,

And I will love thee. — Madam, let her live.

I have a far-off burrow where the King Would miss her and for ever.

*Eleanor.* How sayst thou, sweetheart ?

Wilt thou go with him ? he will marry thee.

*Rosamund.* Give me the poison ; set me free of him !

[*Eleanor offers the vial.*]

No, no ! I will not have it.

*Eleanor.* Then this other, The wiser choice, because my sleep-

ing-draught

May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and make

Thy body loathsome even to thy child ;

While this but leaves thee with a broken heart,

A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over which

If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own, It must be broken for him.

*Rosamund.* O, I see now Your purpose is to fright me — a

troubadour, You play with words. You had never used so many,

Not if you meant it, I am sure. The child —

No — mercy ! No ! (*Kneels.*)

*Eleanor.* Play ! — that bosom never Heaved under the King's hand with such true passion

As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot,  
Which it will quench in blood ! Slave,  
if he love thee,  
Thy life is worth the wrestle for it.  
Arise,  
And dash thyself against me that I  
may slay thee !  
The worm ! shall I let her go ? But  
ha ! what's here ?  
By very God, the cross I gave the  
King !  
His village darling in some lewd  
caress  
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to  
her own. 120  
By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same !  
I warrant  
Thou hast sworn on this my cross a  
hundred times  
Never to leave him — and that merits  
death,  
False oath on holy cross — for thou  
must leave him  
To-day, but not quite yet. My good  
Fitzurse,  
The running down the chase is kind-  
lier sport  
Even than the death. Who knows  
but that thy lover  
May plead so pitifully, that I may  
spare thee ?  
Come hither, man ; stand there. (To  
Rosamund.) Take thy one  
chance ;  
Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy  
lord Fitzurse ; 130  
Crouch even because thou hatest him ;  
fawn upon him  
For thy life and thy son's.  
*Rosamund (rising).* I am a Clifford.  
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.  
I am to die then, tho' there stand be-  
side thee  
One who might grapple with thy dag-  
ger, if he  
Had aught of man, or thou of woman ;  
or I  
Would bow to such a baseness as  
would make me  
Most worthy of it. Both of us will  
die,  
And I will fly with my sweet boy to  
heaven,  
And ~~shout~~ <sup>shout</sup> to all the saints among the  
stars : 140

'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of  
England !  
Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor,  
Whose doings are a horror to the  
east,  
A hissing in the west !' Have we  
not heard  
Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle  
— nay,  
Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own hus-  
band's father —  
Nay, even the accursed heathen Salad-  
deen —  
Strike !  
I challenge thee to meet me before  
God.  
Answer me there.  
*Eleanor (raising the dagger).* This  
in thy bosom, fool, 150  
And after in thy bastard's !  
*Enter BECKET from behind.*  
*Catches hold of her arm.*  
*Becket.* Murderess !  
[*The dagger falls ; they stare at  
one another. After a pause.*]  
*Eleanor.* My lord, we know you  
proud of your fine hand,  
But having now admired it long  
enough,  
We find that it is mightier than it  
seems —  
At least mine own is frailer ; you are  
laming it.  
*Becket.* And lamed and maim'd to  
dislocation, better  
Than raised to take a life which Henry  
bade me  
Guard from the stroke that dooms  
thee after death  
To wail in deathless flame.  
*Eleanor.* Nor you nor I  
Have now to learn, my lord, that our  
good Henry 160  
Says many a thing in sudden heats  
which he  
Gainsays by next sunrising — often  
ready  
To tear himself for having said as  
much.  
My lord, Fitzurse —  
*Becket.* He too ! what dost thou  
here ?  
Dares the bear slouch into the lion's  
den ?  
One downward plunge of his paw  
would rend away



ELLEN TERRY AS ROSAMUND

Eyesight and manhood, life itself,  
from thee.

Go, lest I blast thee with anathema,  
And make thee a world's horror.

*Fitzurse.* My lord, I shall  
Remember this.

*Becket.* I do remember thee ;  
Lest I remember thee to the lion, go.

[*Exit Fitzurse.*  
Take up your dagger; put it in the  
sheath. 172

*Eleanor.* Might not your courtesies  
stoop to hand it me ?  
But crowns must bow when mitres sit  
so high.

Well — well — too costly to be left or  
lost. [*Picks up the dagger.*

I had it from an Arab soldan, who,  
When I was there in Antioch, mar-  
vell'd at

Our unfamiliar beauties of the  
west ;

But wonder'd more at my much con-  
stancy

To the monk-king, Louis, our former  
burthen, 180

From whom, as being too kin, you  
know, my lord,

God's grace and Holy Church deliver'd  
us.



I think, time given, I could have  
talk'd him out of  
His ten wives into one. Look at the  
hilt.  
What excellent workmanship! In our  
poor west  
We cannot do it so well.

*Becket.* We can do worse.  
Madam, I saw your dagger at her  
throat;

I heard your savage cry.

*Eleanor.* Well acted, was it?  
A comedy meant to seem a tragedy —  
A feint, a farce. My honest lord, you  
are known <sup>190</sup>  
Thro' all the courts of Christendom as  
one

That mars a cause with over vio-  
lence.

You have wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak  
not of myself.

We thought to scare this minion of  
the King

Back from her churchless commerce  
with the King

To the fond arms of her first love,  
Fitzurse,

Who swore to marry her. You have  
spoil'd the farce.

My savage cry? Why, she — she —  
when I strove

To work against her license for her  
good,

Bark'd out at me such monstrous  
charges that <sup>200</sup>

The King himself, for love of his own  
sons,

If hearing, would have spurn'd her;  
whereupon

I menaced her with this, as when we  
threaten

A yelper with a stick. Nay, I deny not  
That I was somewhat anger'd. Do  
you hear me?

Believe or no, I care not. You have  
lost

The ear of the King. I have it. — My  
lord paramount,

Our great High-priest, will not your  
Holiness

Vouchsafe a gracious answer to your  
Queen?

*Becket.* Rosamund hath not answer'd  
you one word; <sup>210</sup>

Madam, I will not answer you one  
word.

Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee.  
Leave it, daughter;

Come thou with me to Godstow nun-  
nery,

And live what may be left thee of a  
life

Saved as by miracle alone with  
Him

Who gave it.

*Re-enter GEOFFREY.*

*Geoffrey.* Mother, you told me a  
great fib; it was n't in the willow.

*Becket.* Follow us, my son, and we  
will find it for thee —

Or something manlier. <sup>220</sup>

[*Exeunt Becket, Rosamund, and  
Geoffrey.*

*Eleanor.* The world hath trick'd her  
— that's the King; if so,

There was the farce, the feint — not  
mine. And yet

I am all but sure my dagger was a  
feint

Till the worm turn'd — not life shot  
up in blood,

But death drawn in; — (*looking at the  
vial*) this was no feint, then?  
no.

But can I swear to that, had she but  
given

Plain answer to plain query? nay, me-  
thinks

Had she but bowed herself to meet  
the wave

Of humiliation, worshipt whom she  
loathed,

I should have let her be, scorn'd her too  
much <sup>230</sup>

To harm her. Henry — Becket tells  
him this —

To take my life might lose him Aquit-  
taine.

Too politic for that. Imprison me?  
No, for it came to nothing — only a  
feint.

Did she not tell me I was playing on  
her?

I'll swear to mine own self it was a  
feint.

Why should I swear, Eleanor, who am,  
or was,

A sovereign power? The King plucks  
out their eyes

Who anger him, and shall not I, the  
Queen,

Tear out her heart — kill, kill with  
 knife or venom  
 One of his slanderous harlots? 'None<sup>240</sup>  
 of such?'  
 I love her none the more. Tut, the  
 chance gone,  
 She lives — but not for him; one  
 point is gain'd.  
 O, I that thro' the Pope divorced King  
 Louis,  
 Scorning his monkery, — I that wedded  
 Henry,  
 Honoring his manhood — will he not  
 mock at me,  
 The jealous fool balk'd of her will —  
 with *him*?  
 But he and he must never meet again.  
 Reginald Fitzurse!

*Re-enter FITZURSE.*

*Fitzurse.* Here, Madam, at your  
 pleasure.

*Eleanor.* My pleasure is to have a  
 man about me.<sup>250</sup>  
 Why did you slink away so like a  
 cur?

*Fitzurse.* Madam, I am as much  
 man as the King.  
 Madam, I fear Church-censures like  
 your King.

*Eleanor.* He grovels to the Church  
 when he's black-blooded,  
 But kinglike fought the proud arch-  
 bishop, — kinglike  
 Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly  
 sires,  
 The Normans, striving still to break or  
 bind

The spiritual giant with our island  
 laws  
 And customs, made me for the mo-  
 ment proud

Even of that stale Church-bond which  
 link'd me with him<sup>260</sup>  
 To bear him kingly sons. I am not so  
 sure

But that I love him still. Thou as  
 much man!

No more of that; we will to France  
 and be  
 Beforehand with the King, and brew  
 from out

This Godstow-Becket intermeddling  
 such

A strong hate-philtre as may madden  
 him — madden

Against his priest beyond all hellebore.

## ACT V

SCENE I. — CASTLE IN NORMANDY.  
 KING'S CHAMBER

HENRY, ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT,  
 JOCELYN OF SALISBURY.

*Roger of York.* Nay, nay, my liege,  
 He rides abroad with armed follow-  
 ers,  
 Hath broken all his promises to thy-  
 self,  
 Cursed and anathematized us right and  
 left,  
 Stirr'd up a party there against your  
 son —

*Henry.* Roger of York, you always  
 hated him,  
 Even when you both were boys at  
 Theobald's.

*Roger of York.* I always hated  
 boundless arrogance.  
 In mine own cause I strove against  
 him there,  
 And in thy cause I strive against him  
 now.<sup>10</sup>

*Henry.* I cannot think he moves  
 against my son,  
 Knowing right well with what a ten-  
 derness

He loved my son.

*Roger of York.* Before you made  
 him king.

But Becket ever moves against a king.  
 The Church is all — the crime to be a  
 king.

We trust your Royal Grace, lord of  
 more land

Than any crown in Europe, will not  
 yield

To lay your neck beneath your citi-  
 zen's heel.

*Henry.* Not to a Gregory of my  
 throning! No.

*Foliot.* My royal liege, in aiming at  
 your love,<sup>20</sup>

It may be sometimes I have overshot  
 My duties to our Holy Mother Church,  
 Tho' all the world allows I fall no  
 inch

Behind this Becket, rather go beyond  
 In scourgings, macerations, mortify-  
 ings,

Fasts, disciplines that clear the spirit  
 ual eye,

And break the soul from earth. Let  
all that be.

I boast not; but you know thro' all  
this quarrel

I still have cleaved to the crown, in  
hope the crown

Would cleave to me that but obey'd  
the crown, <sup>30</sup>

Crowning your son; for which our  
loyal service,

And since we likewise swore to obey  
the customs,

York and myself, and our good Salis-  
bury here,

Are push'd from out communion of  
the Church.

*Jocelyn of Salisbury.* Becket hath  
trodden on us like worms, my  
liege,

Trodden one half dead; one half, but  
half alive,

Cries to the King.

*Henry (aside).* Take care o' thyself,  
O King!

*Jocelyn of Salisbury.* Being so  
crush'd and so humiliated

We scarcely dare to bless the food we  
eat

Because of Becket.

*Henry.* What would ye have me do?

*Roger of York.* Summon your bar-  
ons; take their counsel; yet <sup>41</sup>

I know—could swear—as long as  
Becket breathes,

Your Grace will never have one quiet  
hour.

*Henry.* What?—Ay—but pray  
you do not work upon me.

I see your drift—it may be so—and  
yet

You know me easily anger'd. Will  
you hence?

He shall absolve you—you shall have  
redress.

I have a dizzying headache. Let me  
rest.

I'll call you by and by.

*[Exeunt Roger of York, Foliot, and  
Jocelyn of Salisbury.]*

Would he were dead! I have lost all  
love for him. <sup>50</sup>

If God would take him in some sudden  
way—

Would he were dead! *[Lies down.]*

*Page (entering).* My liege, the Queen  
of England.

*Henry.* God's eyes! *[Starting up.  
Enter ELEANOR.]*

*Eleanor.* Of England? Say of Aquit-  
taine.

I am no Queen of England. I had  
dream'd

I was the bride of England, and a  
queen.

*Henry.* And,—while you dream'd  
you were the bride of England,—  
stirring her baby-king against me?  
ha!

*Eleanor.* The brideless Becket is  
thy king and mine;  
I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

*Henry.* Except I clap thee into  
prison here, <sup>60</sup>  
lest thou shouldst play the wanton  
there again.

Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of Aquit-  
taine!

You were but Aquitaine to Louis—no  
wife;

You are only Aquitaine to me—no  
wife.

*Eleanor.* And why, my lord, should  
I be wife to one

That only wedded me for Aquitaine?  
Yet this no-wife—her six and thirty  
sail

Of Provence blew you to your English  
throne;

And this no-wife has borne you four  
brave sons,

And one of them at least is like to  
prove <sup>70</sup>

Bigger in our small world than thou  
art.

*Henry.* Ay—

Richard, if he be mine—I hope him  
mine.

But thou art like enough to make him  
thine.

*Eleanor.* Becket is like enough to  
make all his.

*Henry.* Methought I had recover'd  
of the Becket,

That all was planed and bevell'd  
smooth again,

Save from some hateful cantrip of  
thine own.

*Eleanor.* I will go live and die in  
Aquitaine.

I dream'd I was the consort of a king,  
Not one whose back his priest has  
broken.

*Henry.* What! 80  
Is the end come? You, will you crown  
my foe

My victor in mid-battle? I will be  
Sole master of my house. The end is  
mine.

What game, what juggle, what devilry  
are you playing?

Why do you thrust this Becket on me  
again?

*Eleanor.* Why? for I am true wife,  
and have my fears  
Lest Becket thrust you even from  
your throne.

Do you know this cross, my liege?

*Henry (turning his head).* Away!  
not I.

*Eleanor.* Not even the central diamond,  
worth, I think,  
Half of the Antioch whence I had it.

*Henry.* That?

*Eleanor.* I gave it you, and you  
your paramour; 91  
She sends it back, as being dead to  
earth,  
So dead henceforth to you.

*Henry.* Dead! you have murder'd  
her,

Found out her secret bower and murder'd  
her.

*Eleanor.* Your Becket knew the  
secret of your bower.

*Henry (calling out).* Ho there! thy  
rest of life is hopeless prison.

*Eleanor.* And what would my own  
Aquitaine say to that?  
First, free thy captive from her hopeless  
prison.

*Henry.* O devil, can I free her from  
the grave?

*Eleanor.* You are too tragic; both  
of us are players 100  
In such a comedy as our court of  
Providence

Had laugh'd at. That's a delicate  
Latin lay

Of Walter Map: the lady holds the  
cleric

Lovelier than any soldier, his poor  
tonsure

A crown of Empire. Will you have  
it again?

*(Offering the cross. He dashes it down.)*

Saint Cupid, that is too irreverent.

Then mine once more. *(Puts it on.)*

Your cleric hath your lady.

Nay, what uncomely faces, could he  
see you!

Foam at the mouth because King  
Thomas, lord 109

Not only of your vassals but amours,  
Thro' chasteest honor of the Decalogue  
Hath used the full authority of his  
Church

To put her into Godstow nunnery.

*Henry.* To put her into Godstow  
nunnery!

He dared not—liar! yet, yet I re-  
member—

I do remember.

He bade me put her into a nunnery—  
Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devil-  
stow!

The Church! the Church!

God's eyes! I would the Church were  
down in hell! *[Exit.*

*Eleanor.* Aha! 121

*Enter the four KNIGHTS.*

*Fitzurse.* What made the King cry  
out so furiously?

*Eleanor.* Our Becket, who will not  
absolve the bishops.

I think ye four have cause to love this  
Becket.

*Fitzurse.* I hate him for his inso-  
lence to all.

*De Tracy.* And I for all his inso-  
lence to thee.

*De Brito.* I hate him for I hate him  
is my reason,

And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.

*De Morville.* I do not love him, for  
he did his best

To break the barons, and now braves  
the King. 130

*Eleanor.* Strike, then, at once, the  
King would have him—See!

*Re-enter HENRY.*

*Henry.* No man to love me, honor  
me, obey me!

Sluggards and fools!

The slave that eat my bread has kick'd  
his King!

The dog I cramm'd with dainties wor-  
ried me!

The fellow that on a lame jade came  
to court,

A ragged cloak for saddle—he, he, he,  
To shake my throne, to push into my  
chamber—

My bed, where even the slave is pri-  
vate—he—

I'll have her out again, he shall ab-  
 solve<sup>140</sup>  
 The bishops—they but did my will  
 —not you—  
 Sluggards and fools, why do you  
 stand and stare?  
 You are no King's men—you—you  
 —you are Becket's men.  
 Down with King Henry! up with the  
 Archbishop!  
 Will no man free me from this pesti-  
 lent priest?  
 [Exit.  
 [The Knights draw their swords.  
*Eleanor.* Are ye King's men? I  
 am King's woman, I.  
*The Knights.* King's men! King's  
 men!

## SCENE II

A ROOM IN CANTERBURY MONASTERY

BECKET and JOHN OF SALISBURY.

*Becket.* York said so?*John of Salisbury.* Yes: a man may  
 take good counsel

Even from his foe.

*Becket.* York will say anything.  
 What is he saying now? gone to the  
 KingAnd taken our anathema with him.  
 York!Can the King de-anathematize this  
 York?*John of Salisbury.* Thomas, I would  
 thou hadst return'd to Eng-  
 landLike some wise prince of this world  
 from his wars,With more of olive-branch and am-  
 nestyFor foes at home—thou hast raised  
 the world against thee.*Becket.* Why, John, my kingdom is  
 not of this world.<sup>10</sup>*John of Salisbury.* If it were more  
 of this world it might beMore of the next. A policy of wise  
 pardonWins here as well as there. To bless  
 thine enemies—*Becket.* Ay, mine, not Heaven's.*John of Salisbury.* And may there  
 not be somethingOf this world's leaven in thee too,  
 when cryingOn Holy Church to thunder out her  
 rightsAnd thine own wrong so pitilessly?  
 Ah, Thomas,The lightnings that we think are only  
 Heaven'sFlash sometimes out of earth against  
 the heavens.The soldier, when he lets his whole  
 self go<sup>20</sup>Lost in the common good, the com-  
 mon wrong,Strikes truest even for his own self.  
 I craveThy pardon—I have still thy leave  
 to speak.Thou hast waged God's war against  
 the King; and yetWe are self-uncertain creatures, and  
 we may,Yea, even when we know not, mix  
 our spitesAnd private hates with our defence  
 of Heaven.*Enter EDWARD GRIM.**Becket.* Thou art but yesterday  
 from Cambridge, Grim;

What say ye there of Becket?

*Grim.* I believe himThe bravest in our roll of primates  
 down<sup>30</sup>From Austin—there are some—for  
 there are men

Of canker'd judgment everywhere—

*Becket.* Who hold

With York, with York against me.

*Grim.* Well, my lord,

A stranger monk desires access to you.

*Becket.* York against Canterbury,

York against God!

I am open to him. [Exit Grim.

*Enter ROSAMUND as a Monk.**Rosamund.* Can I speak with you  
 Alone, my father?*Becket.* Come you to confess?*Rosamund.* Not now.*Becket.* Then speak; this is my  
 other self,Who, like my conscience, never lets  
 me be.*Rosamund (throwing back the cowl).*I know him, our good John of  
 Salisbury.<sup>40</sup>

*Becket.* Breaking already from thy novitiate  
To plunge into this bitter world again —

These wells of Marah! I am grieved,  
my daughter.

I thought that I had made a peace for thee.

*Rosamund.* Small peace was mine  
in my novitiate, father.

Thro' all closed doors a dreadful  
whisper crept

That thou wouldst excommunicate  
the King.

I could not eat, sleep, pray. I had  
with me

The monk's disguise thou gavest me  
for my bower;

I think our abbess knew it and allow'd  
it. <sup>50</sup>

I fled, and found thy name a charm  
to get me

Food, roof, and rest. I met a robber  
once;

I told him I was bound to see the  
archbishop:

'Pass on,' he said, and in thy name I  
pass'd

From house to house. In one a son  
stone-blind

Sat by his mother's hearth. He had  
gone too far

Into the King's own woods; and the  
poor mother,

Soon as she learnt I was a friend of  
thine,

Cried out against the cruelty of the  
King.

I said it was the King's courts, not  
the King. <sup>60</sup>

But she would not believe me, and  
she wish'd

The Church were king; she had seen  
the archbishop once,

So mild, so kind. The people love  
thee, father.

*Becket.* Alas! when I was Chan-  
cellor to the King,

I fear I was as cruel as the King.

*Rosamund.* Cruel? O, no — it is  
the law, not he;

The customs of the realm.

*Becket.* The customs! customs!

*Rosamund.* My lord, you have not  
excommunicated him?

O, if you have, absolve him!

*Becket.* Daughter, daughter,  
Deal not with things you know not.

*Rosamund.* I know him.  
Then you have done it, and I call you  
cruel. <sup>71</sup>

*John of Salisbury.* No, daughter,  
you mistake our good arch-  
bishop;

For once in France the King had been  
so harsh,

He thought to excommunicate him —  
Thomas,

You could not — old affection mas-  
ter'd you,

You falter'd into tears.

*Rosamund.* God bless him for it!

*Becket.* Nay, make me not a wo-  
man, John of Salisbury,

Nor make me traitor to my holy  
office.

Did not a man's voice ring along the  
aisle,

'The King is sick and almost unto  
death.' <sup>80</sup>

How could I excommunicate him  
then?

*Rosamund.* And wilt thou excom-  
municate him now?

*Becket.* Daughter, my time is short,  
I shall not do it.

And were it longer — well — I should  
not do it.

*Rosamund.* Thanks in this life, and  
in the life to come!

*Becket.* Get thee back to thy nun-  
nery with all haste;

Let this be thy last trespass. But one  
question —

How fares thy pretty boy, the little  
Geoffrey?

No fever, cough, croup, sickness?

*Rosamund.* No, but saved  
From all that by our solitude. The  
plagues <sup>90</sup>

That smite the city spare the solitudes.

*Becket.* God save him from all sick-  
ness of the soul!

Thee too, thy solitude among thy  
nuns,

May that save thee! Doth he remem-  
ber me?

*Rosamund.* I warrant him.

*Becket.* He is marvellously like  
thee.

*Rosamund.* Likier the King.

*Becket.* No, daughter.

*Rosamund.* Ay, but wait  
Till his nose rises: he will be very  
king.

*Becket.* Even so; but think not of  
the King. Farewell!

*Rosamund.* My lord, the city is full  
of armed men.

*Becket.* Even so. Farewell!

*Rosamund.* I will but pass to ves-  
pers, <sup>100</sup>  
And breathe one prayer for my liege-  
lord the King,  
His child and mine own soul, and so  
return.

*Becket.* Pray for me too; much  
need of prayer have I.

[*Rosamund kneels and goes.*]

Dan John, how much we lose, we  
celibates,  
Lacking the love of woman and of  
child!

*John of Salisbury.* More gain than  
loss; for of your wives you  
shall

Find one a slut whose fairest linen  
seems  
Foul as her dust-cloth, if she used it  
— one

So charged with tongue that every  
thread of thought

Is broken ere it joins — a shrew to  
boot, <sup>110</sup>

Whose evil song far on into the night  
Thrills to the topmost tile — no hope  
but death;

One slow, fat, white, a burthen of the  
hearth;

And one that being thwarted ever  
swoons

And weeps herself into the place of  
power;

And one an *uxor pauperis* *Ibyci*.  
So rare the household honey-making  
bee,

Man's help! but we, we have the  
Blessed Virgin

For worship, and our Mother Church  
for bride;

And all the souls we saved and fa-  
ther'd here <sup>120</sup>

Will greet us as our babes in Para-  
dise.

What noise was that? she told us of  
arm'd men

Here in the city. Will you not with-  
draw?

*Becket.* I once was out with Henry  
in the days

When Henry loved me, and we came  
upon

A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still  
I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she  
did not stir;

The snow had frozen round her, and  
she sat

Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold  
eggs.

Look! how this love, this mother,  
runs thro' all <sup>130</sup>

The world God made — even the  
beast — the bird!

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, still a lover  
of the beast and bird?

But these arm'd men — will you not  
hide yourself?

Perchance the fierce De Brocs from  
Saltwood Castle,

To assail our Holy Mother lest she  
brood

Too long o'er this hard egg, the world,  
and send

Her whole heart's heat into it, till it  
break

Into young angels. Pray you, hide  
yourself.

*Becket.* There was a little fair-  
hair'd Norman maid

Lived in my mother's house; if Rosa-  
mund is <sup>140</sup>

The world's rose, as her name imports  
her — she

Was the world's lily.

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, and what  
of her?

*Becket.* She died of leprosy.

*John of Salisbury.* I know not why  
You call these old things back again,  
my lord.

*Becket.* The drowning man, they  
say, remembers all

The chances of his life, just ere he  
dies.

*John of Salisbury.* Ay — but these  
arm'd men — will you drown  
yourself?

He loses half the meed of martyrdom  
Who will be martyr when he might  
escape.

*Becket.* What day of the week?  
Tuesday?

*John of Salisbury.* Tuesday, my  
lord. <sup>150</sup>

*Becket.* On a Tuesday was I born,  
 and on a Tuesday  
 Baptized; and on a Tuesday did I fly  
 Forth from Northampton; on a Tuesday  
 pass'd  
 From England into bitter banishment;  
 On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to  
 me  
 The ghostly warning of my martyr-  
 dom;  
 On a Tuesday from mine exile I re-  
 turn'd,

And on a Tuesday —

*TRACY enters, then FITZURSE, DE  
 BRITO, and DE MORVILLE. MONKS  
 following.*

— on a Tuesday — Tracy!  
*(A long silence, broken by Fitzurse  
 saying, contemptuously,)*

God help thee!

*John of Salisbury (aside).* How the  
 good archbishop reddens!  
 He never yet could brook the note of  
 scorn.

16c



'The Mother Church of England,  
 My Canterbury'



*Fitzurse.* My lord, we bring a message from the King  
Beyond the water; will you have it alone,

Or with these listeners near you?

*Becket.* As you will.

*Fitzurse.* Nay, as you will.

*Becket.* Nay, as you will.

*John of Salisbury.* Why, then,  
Better perhaps to speak with them apart.

Let us withdraw.

[*All go out except the four Knights and Becket.*]

*Fitzurse.* We are all alone with him.  
Shall I not smite him with his own cross-staff?

*De Morville.* No, look! the door is open: let him be.

*Fitzurse.* The King condemns your excommunicating—

*Becket.* This is no secret, but a public matter. 170

In here again!

JOHN OF SALISBURY and MONKS return.

Now, sirs, the King's commands!

*Fitzurse.* The King beyond the water, thro' our voices,

Commands you to be dutiful and leal  
To your young King on this side of the water,

Not scorn him for the foibles of his youth.

What! you would make his coronation void

By cursing those who crown'd him.  
Out upon you!

*Becket.* Reginald, all men know I loved the prince.

His father gave him to my care, and I

Became his second father. He had his faults, 180

For which I would have laid mine own life down

To help him from them, since indeed I loved him,

And love him next after my lord his father.

Rather than dim the splendor of his crown

I fain would treble and quadruple it  
With revenues, realms, and golden provinces

So that were done in equity.

*Fitzurse.* You have broken  
Your bond of peace, your treaty with the King—

Wakening such brawls and loud disturbances

In England, that he calls you over-sea 190

To answer for it in his Norman courts.

*Becket.* Prate not of bonds, for never, O, never again

Shall the waste voice of the bond-breaking sea

Divide me from the mother church of England,

My Canterbury. Loud disturbances! O, ay—the bells rang out even to deafening,

Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants and hymns

In all the churches, trumpets in the halls,

Sobs, laughter, cries; they spread their raiment down

Before me—would have made my pathway flowers, 200

Save that it was midwinter in the street,

But full midsummer in those honest hearts.

*Fitzurse.* The King commands you to absolve the bishops

Whom you have excommunicated.

*Becket.* I? Not I, the Pope. Ask him for absolution.

*Fitzurse.* But you advised the Pope.

*Becket.* And so I did. They have but to submit.

*The Four Knights.* The King commands you.

We are all King's men.

*Becket.* King's men at least should know

That their own King closed with me last July

That I should pass the censures of the Church 210

On those that crown'd young Henry in this realm,

And trampled on the rights of Canterbury.

*Fitzurse.* What! dare you charge the King with treachery?

He sanction thee to excommunicate

The prelates whom he chose to crown  
his son!

*Becket.* I spake no word of treachery,  
Reginald.

But for the truth of this I make  
appeal

To all the archbishops, bishops, prelates,  
barons,

Monks, knights, five hundred, that  
were there and heard.

Nay, you yourself were there; you  
heard yourself. 220

*Fitzurse.* I was not there.

*Becket.* I saw you there.

*Fitzurse.* I was not.

*Becket.* You were. I never forget  
anything.

*Fitzurse.* He makes the King a  
traitor, me a liar.

How long shall we forbear him?

*John of Salisbury (drawing Becket  
aside).* O my good lord,

Speak with them privately on this  
hereafter.

You see they have been revelling, and  
I fear

Are braced and brazen'd up with  
Christmas wines

For any murderous brawl.

*Becket.* And yet they prate  
Of mine, my brawls, when those that  
name themselves

Of the King's part have broken down  
our barns, 230

Wasted our diocese, outraged our  
tenants,

Lifted our produce, driven our clerics  
out—

Why they, your friends, those ruffians,  
the De Brocs,

They stood on Dover beach to murder  
me,

They slew my stags in mine own  
manor here,

Mutilated, poor brute, my sumpter-  
mule,

Plunder'd the vessel full of Gascon  
wine,

The old King's present, carried off the  
casks,

Kill'd half the crew, dungeon'd the  
other half

In Pevensey Castle—

*De Morville.* Why not rather then,  
If this be so, complain to your young

King,

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Not punish of your own authority?

*Becket.* Mine enemies barr'd all  
access to the boy.

They knew he loved me.

Hugh, Hugh, how proudly you exalt  
your head!

Nay, when they seek to overturn our  
rights,

I ask no leave of king, or mortal man,  
To set them straight again. Alode I  
do it.

Give to the King the things that are  
the King's,

And those of God to God.

*Fitzurse.* Threats! threats! ye hear  
him. 250

What! will he excommunicate all the  
world?

[*The Knights come round Becket.*

*De Tracy.* He shall not.

*De Brito.* Well, as yet—I should  
be grateful—

He hath not excommunicated me.

*Becket.* Because thou wast born ex-  
communicate.

I never spied in thee one gleam of  
grace.

*De Brito.* Your Christian's Chris-  
tian charity!

*Becket.* By Saint Denis—

*De Brito.* Ay, by Saint Denis, now  
will he flame out,

And lose his head as old Saint Denis  
did.

*Becket.* Ye think to scare me from  
my loyalty

To God and to the Holy Father. No!  
Tho' all the swords in England flash'd  
above me 261

Ready to fall at Henry's word or  
yours—

Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets  
upon earth

Blared from the heights of all the  
thrones of her kings,

Blowing the world against me, I would  
stand

Clothed with the full authority of  
Rome,

Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,  
First of the foremost of their files who  
die

For God, to people heaven in the  
great day

When God makes up his jewels. Once

I fled—

270

Never again, and you — I marvel at you —

Ye know what is between us. Ye have sworn

Yourselves my men when I was Chancellor —

My vassals — and yet threaten your archbishop

In his own house.

*Knights.* Nothing can be between us

That goes against our fealty to the King.

*Fitzurse.* And in his name we charge you that ye keep

This traitor from escaping.

*Becket.* Rest you easy, For I am easy to keep. I shall not fly.

Here, here, here will you find me.

*De Morville.* Know you not You have spoken to the peril of your life ?

*Becket.* As I shall speak again.

*Fitzurse, De Tracy, and De Brito.* To arms !

[*They rush out, De Morville lingers.*

*Becket.* De Morville,

I had thought so well of you ; and even now

You seem the least assassin of the four. O, do not damn yourself for company !

Is it too late for me to save your soul ? I pray you for one moment stay and speak.

*De Morville.* Becket, it is too late.

[*Exit.*

*Becket.* Is it too late ?

Too late on earth may be too soon in hell.

*Knights (in the distance).* Close the great gate — ho, there — upon the town !

*Becket's Retainers.* Shut the hall-doors !

[*A pause.*

*Becket.* You hear them, brother John ;

Why do you stand so silent, brother John ?

*John of Salisbury.* For I was musing on an ancient saw,

*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re ;*

Is strength less strong when hand-in-hand with grace ?

*Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus.* Thomas,

Why should you heat yourself for such as these ?

*Becket.* Methought I answer'd moderately enough.

*John of Salisbury.* As one that blows the coal to cool the fire.

My lord, I marvel why you never lean On any man's advising but your own.

*Becket.* Is it so, Dan John ? well, what should I have done ?

*John of Salisbury.* You should have taken counsel with your friends Before these bandits brake into your presence.

They seek — you make — occasion for your death.

*Becket.* My counsel is already taken, John.

I am prepared to die.

*John of Salisbury.* We are sinners all, The best of all not all-prepared to die.

*Becket.* God's will be done !

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, well. God's will be done !

*Grim (re-entering).* My lord, the knights are arming in the garden

Beneath the sycamore.

*Becket.* Good ! let them arm.

*Grim.* And one of the De Brocs is with them, Robert,

The apostate monk that was with Randolph here.

He knows the twists and turnings of the place.

*Becket.* No fear !

*Grim.* No fear, my lord.

[*Crashes on the hall-doors. The Monks flee.*

*Becket (rising).* Our dovecote flown ! I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.

*John of Salisbury.* Take refuge in your own cathedral, Thomas.

*Becket.* Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day ?

Valor and holy life should go together. Why should all monks be cowards ?

*John of Salisbury.* Are they so ? I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.

*Becket.* Ay, but I told them I would wait them here.

*Grim.* May they not say you dared not show yourself

In your old place ? and vespers are beginning.

[*Bell rings for vespers till end of scene.*

You should attend the office, give them heart.

They fear you slain; they dread they know not what.

*Becket.* Ay, monks, not men.

*Grim.* I am a monk, my lord.

Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us. Some would stand by you to the death.

*Becket.* Your pardon.

*John of Salisbury.* He said, 'Attend the office.'

*Becket.* Attend the office?

Why then—the Cross!—who bears my Cross before me? <sup>331</sup>

Methought they would have brain'd me with it, John. [*Grim takes it.*]

*Grim.* I! Would that I could bear thy cross indeed!

*Becket.* The mitre!

*John of Salisbury.* Will you wear it?—there!

[*Becket puts on the mitre.*]

*Becket.* The pall!

I go to meet my King!

[*Puts on the pall.*]

*Grim.* To meet the King?

[*Crashes on the doors as they go out.*]

*John of Salisbury.* Why do you move with such a stateliness?

Can you not hear them yonder like a storm,

Battering the doors, and breaking thro' the walls?

*Becket.* Why do the heathen rage?

My two good friends,

What matters murder'd here, or murder'd there? <sup>340</sup>

And yet my dream foretold my martyrdom

In mine own church. It is God's will. Go on.

Nay, drag me not. We must not seem to fly.

## SCENE III

## NORTH TRANSEPT OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

*On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle.*

*Winter afternoon slowly darkening.*

*Low thunder now and then of an approaching storm. MONKS heard chanting the service. ROSAMUND kneeling.*

*Rosamund.* O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict. —

These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces —

Thy holy follower founded Canterbury —

Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,

Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,

Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;

Save him till all as saintly as thyself

He miss the searching flame of purgatory,

And pass at once perfect to Paradise.

[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.*]

Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not here — <sup>10</sup>

Not yet, thank heaven. O, save him!

[*Goes up steps leading to choir.*]

*Becket (entering, forced along by John of Salisbury and Grim).* No, I tell you!

I cannot bear a hand upon my person; Why do you force me thus against my will?

*Grim.* My lord, we force you from your enemies.

*Becket.* As you would force a king from being crown'd.

*John of Salisbury.* We must not force the crown of martyrdom.

[*Service stops. Monks come down from the stairs that lead to the choir.*]

*Monks.* Here is the great archbishop! He lives! he lives!

Die with him, and be glorified together.

*Becket.* Together?—get you back! go on with the office.

*Monks.* Come, then, with us to vespers.

*Becket.* How can I come <sup>20</sup>

When you so block the entry? Back, I say!

Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven be served

Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the minster-bells,

And the great deeps were broken up again,

And hiss'd against the sun?

[*Noise in the cloisters.*]

*Monks.* The murderers, hark! Let us hide! let us hide!

*Becket.* What do these people fear?  
*Monks.* Those arm'd men in the  
 cloister.

*Becket.* Be not such cravens!  
 I will go out and meet them.

*Grim and Others.* Shut the doors!  
 We will not have him slain before our  
 face.

[*They close the doors of the transept.*  
*Knocking.*

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst  
 the doors! [*Knocking.*

*Becket.* Why, these are our own  
 monks who follow'd us! 31  
 And will you bolt them out, and have  
 them slain?

Undo the doors; the church is not a  
 castle.

Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are  
 you deaf?

What have I lost authority among you?  
 Stand by, make way!

*Opens the doors. Enter Monks from  
 cloister.*

Come in, my friends, come in!  
 Nay, faster, faster!

*Monks.* O, my lord archbishop,  
 A score of knights all arm'd with  
 swords and axes —

To the choir, to the choir!

[*Monks divide, part flying by the  
 stairs on the right, part by those  
 on the left. The rush of these last  
 bears Becket along with them  
 some way up the steps, where he  
 is left standing alone.*

*Becket.* Shall I too pass to the choir,  
 And die upon the patriarchal throne  
 Of all my predecessors?

*John of Salisbury.* No, to the crypt!  
 Twenty steps down. Stumble not in  
 the darkness, 42

Lest they should seize thee.

*Grim.* To the crypt? no — no,  
 To the chapel of Saint Blaise beneath  
 the roof!

*John of Salisbury (pointing upward  
 and downward).* That way or  
 this! Save thyself either way.

*Becket.* O, no, not either way, nor  
 any way  
 Save by that way which leads thro'  
 night to light.

Not twenty steps, but one.

And fear not I should stumble in the  
 darkness,

Not tho' it be their hour, the power  
 of darkness, 50  
 But my hour too, the power of light  
 in darkness!

I am not in the darkness but the light,  
 Seen by the Church in heaven, the  
 Church on earth —

The power of life in death to make  
 her free!

*Enter the four KNIGHTS. JOHN OF  
 SALISBURY flies to the altar of Saint  
 Benedict.*

*Fitzurse.* Here, here, King's men!  
 [*Catches hold of the last flying  
 Monk.*

Where is the traitor Becket?

*Monk.* I am not he! I am not he,  
 my lord.

I am not he indeed!

*Fitzurse.* Hence to the fiend!  
 [*Pushes him away.*

Where is this treble traitor to the King?  
*De Tracy.* Where is the archbishop,  
 Thomas Becket?

*Becket.* Here.

No traitor to the King, but Priest of  
 God, 60

Primate of England.

[*Descending into the transept.*

I am he ye seek.

What would ye have of me?

*Fitzurse.* Your life.

*De Tracy.* Your life.

*De Morville.* Save that you will ab-  
 solve the bishops.

*Becket.* Never, —  
 Except they make submission to the  
 Church.

You had my answer to that cry before.

*De Morville.* Why, then you are a  
 dead man; flee!

*Becket.* I will not.

I am readier to be slain than thou to  
 slay.

Hugh, I know well thou hast but half  
 a heart

To bathe this sacred pavement with  
 my blood.

God pardon thee and these, but God's  
 full curse 70

Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm  
 One of my flock!

*Fitzurse.* Was not the great gate  
 shut?

They are thronging in to vespers —  
 half the town.



TRANSEPT OF MARTYRDOM, CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him  
and carry him!

Come with us — nay — thou art our  
prisoner — come!

*De Morville.* Ay, make him prisoner,  
do not harm the man.

[*Fitzurse lays hold of the Arch-  
bishop's pall.*]

*Becket.* Touch me not!

*De Brito.* How the good priest gods  
himself!

He is not yet ascended to the Father.

*Fitzurse.* I will not only touch, but  
drag thee hence.

*Becket.* Thou art my man, thou art  
my vassal. Away!

[*Flings him off till he reels, almost  
to falling.*]

*De Tracy (lays hold of the pall).*  
Come; as he said, thou art our  
prisoner.

*Becket.* Down!

[*Throws him headlong.*]

*Fitzurse (advances with drawn  
sword).* I told thee that I should  
remember thee!

*Becket.* Profligate pander!

*Fitzurse.* Do you hear that? Strike,  
strike.

[*Strikes off the Archbishop's mitre,  
and wounds him in the forehead.*]

*Becket (covers his eyes with his hand).*  
I do commend my cause to God,

the Virgin,

Saint Denis of France and Saint Al-  
phege of England,

And all the tutelar Saints of Canterbury.

[*Grim wraps his arms about the  
Archbishop.*]

Spare this defence, dear brother.

[*Tracy has arisen, and approaches,  
hesitatingly, with his sword  
raised.*]

*Fitzurse.* Strike him, Tracy!  
*Rosamund (rushing down steps from  
the choir).* No, no, no, no!

*Fitzurse.* This wanton here. *De  
Morville,*  
Hold her away.

*De Morville.* I hold her.

*Rosamund (held back by De Morville,  
and stretching out her arms).*

Mercy, mercy,  
As you would hope for mercy!

*Fitzurse.* Strike, I say!

*Grim.* O God, O noble knights, O  
sacrilege! <sup>91</sup>  
Strike our archbishop in his own  
cathedral!

The Pope, the King, will curse you  
— the whole world

Abhor you; ye will die the death of  
dogs!

Nay, nay, good Tracy.

[*Lifts his arm.*

*Fitzurse.* Answer not, but strike.

*De Tracy.* There is my answer then.

[*Sword falls on Grim's arm, and  
glances from it, wounding  
Becket.*

*Grim.* Mine arm is sever'd.  
I can no more—fight out the good  
fight—die

Conqueror.

[*Staggering into the chapel of Saint  
Benedict.*

*Becket (falling on his knees).* At the  
right hand of Power—

Power and great glory—for thy  
Church, O Lord—

Into thy hands, O Lord—into thy  
hands!— [*Sinks prone.*

*De Brito.* This last to rid thee of a  
world of brawls! (*Kills him.*)

The traitor's dead, and will arise no  
more. <sup>102</sup>

*Fitzurse.* Nay, have we still'd him?

What! the great archbishop!

Does he breathe? No?

*De Tracy.* No, Reginald, he is dead.

[*Storm bursts.*<sup>1</sup>

*De Morville.* Will the earth gape  
and swallow us?

*De Brito.* The deed's done—

Away!

[*De Brito, De Tracy, Fitzurse,  
rush out, crying 'King's men!'*

*De Morville follows slowly.*

*Flashes of lightning thro' the*

*Cathedral. Rosamund seen*

*kneeling by the body of Becket.*

<sup>1</sup> A tremendous thunderstorm actually  
broke over the Cathedral as the murderers  
were leaving it.



'Get the Count to give me his falcon  
And that will make me well'

## THE FALCON

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE COUNT FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI  
FILIPPO, *the Count's foster-brother.*  
THE LADY GIOVANNA.  
ELISABETTA, *the Count's nurse.*

### THE FALCON

SCENE. — AN ITALIAN COTTAGE,  
CASTLE AND MOUNTAINS SEEN  
THROUGH WINDOW

ELISABETTA *discovered seated on stool  
in window, darning. The Count  
with Falcon on his hand comes down  
through the door at back. A with-  
ered wreath on the wall.*

*Elisabetta.* So, my lord, the Lady  
Giovanna, who hath been away so  
long, came back last night with her  
son to the castle.

*Count.* Hear that, my bird ! Art thou  
not jealous of her ?  
My princess of the cloud, my plumed  
purveyor,  
My far-eyed queen of the winds —  
thou that canst soar  
Beyond the morning lark, and, how-  
soe'er  
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop  
down upon him  
Eagle-like, lightning-like — strike,  
make his feathers  
Glance in mid heaven.

[*Crosses to chair.*  
I would thou hadst a mate !



Thy breed will die with thee, and mine  
with me;

I am as lone and loveless as thyself.

[*Sits in chair.*]

Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself —  
be jealous!

Thou shouldst be jealous of her. Tho'  
I bred thee

The full-train'd marvel of all falconry,  
And love thee and thou me, yet if Gio-  
vanna

Be here again — No, no! Buss me, my  
bird!

The stately widow has no heart for me.  
Thou art the last friend left me upon  
earth —

No, no again to that! [*Rises and turns.*]

My good old nurse,  
I had forgotten thou wast sitting  
there.

*Elisabetta.* Ay, and forgotten thy  
foster-brother too.

*Count.* Bird-babble for my falcon!  
Let it pass.

What art thou doing there?

*Elisabetta.* Darning, your lordship.  
We cannot flaunt it in new feathers  
now.

Nay, if we will buy diamond neck-  
laces

To please our lady, we must darn, my  
lord.

This old thing here (*points to necklace  
round her neck*), they are but  
blue beads — my Piero,

God rest his honest soul, he bought  
'em for me,

Ay, but he knew I meant to marry  
him.

How couldst thou do it, my son?  
How couldst thou do it?

*Count.* She saw it at a dance, upon  
a neck

Less lovely than her own, and long'd  
for it.

*Elisabetta.* She told thee as much?

*Count.* No, no — a friend of hers.

*Elisabetta.* Shame on her that she  
took it at thy hands,  
She rich enough to have bought it for  
herself!

*Count.* She would have robb'd me  
then of a great pleasure.

*Elisabetta.* But hath she yet re-  
turn'd thy love?

*Count.* Not yet!

*Elisabetta.* She should return thy  
necklace then.

*Count.* Ay, if  
She knew the giver; but I bound the  
seller

To silence, and I left it privily  
At Florence, in her palace.

*Elisabetta.* And sold thine own  
To buy it for her. She not know?  
She knows

There's none such other —

*Count.* Madman anywhere.  
Speak freely, tho' to call a madman  
mad

Will hardly help to make him sane  
again.

*Enter FILIPPO.*

*Filippo.* Ah, the women, the wo-  
men! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here  
again! you that have the face of an  
angel and the heart of a — that's too  
positive! You that have a score of  
lovers and have not a heart for any of  
them — that's positive-negative: you  
that have not the head of a toad, and  
not a heart like the jewel in it — that's  
too negative; you that have a cheek  
like a peach and a heart like the stone  
in it — that's positive again — that's  
better!

*Elisabetta.* Sh — sh — Filippo!

*Filippo* (*turns half round*). Here  
has our master been a-glorifying and  
a-velveting and a-silking himself, and  
a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch  
her eye for a dozen year, till he has n't  
an eye left in his own tail to flourish  
among the peahens, and all along o'  
you, Monna Giovanna, all along o' you!

*Elisabetta.* Sh — sh — Filippo!  
Can't you hear that you are saying be-  
hind his back what you see you are  
saying afore his face?

*Count.* Let him — he never spares  
me to my face!

*Filippo.* No, my lord, I never spare  
your lordship to your lordship's face.  
nor behind your lordship's back, nor  
to right, nor to left, nor to round about  
and back to your lordship's face again,  
for I'm honest, your lordship.

*Count.* Come, come, Filippo, what  
is there in the larder?

[*Elisabetta crosses to fireplace and  
puts on wood.*]

*Filippo.* Shelves and hooks, shelves and hooks, and when I see the shelves I am like to hang myself on the hooks.

*Count.* No bread?

*Filippo.* Half a breakfast for a rat!

*Count.* Milk?

*Filippo.* Three laps for a cat! 90

*Count.* Cheese?

*Filippo.* A supper for twelve mites.

*Count.* Eggs?

*Filippo.* One, but addled.

*Count.* No bird?

*Filippo.* Half a tit and a hern's bill.

*Count.* Let be thy jokes and thy jerks, man! Anything or nothing? 99

*Filippo.* Well, my lord, if all-but-nothing be anything, and one plate of dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then there is anything in your lordship's larder at your lordship's service, if your lordship care to call for it.

*Count.* Good mother, happy was the prodigal son,

For he return'd to the rich father; I  
But add my poverty to thine. And  
all

Thro' following of my fancy. Pray  
thee make

Thy slender meal out of those scraps  
and shreds 110

Filippo spoke of. As for him and  
me,

There sprouts a salad in the garden  
still.

(*To the Falcon.*) Why didst thou miss  
thy quarry yester-even?

To-day, my beauty, thou must dash us  
down

Our dinner from the skies. Away,  
Filippo! 115

[*Exit, followed by Filippo.*]

*Elisabetta.* I knew it would come to this. She has beggared him. I always knew it would come to this! (*Goes up to table as if to resume darning, and looks out of window.*) Why, as I live, there is Monna Giovanna coming down the hill from the castle. Stops and stares at our cottage. Ay, ay! stare at it: it's all you have left us. Shame on you! *She* beautiful! sleek as a miller's mouse! Meal enough, meat enough, well fed; but beautiful — bah! Nay, see, why she turns down the path through our little vineyard,

and I sneezed three times this morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in her life too! Why, bless the saints! I'll be bound to confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this — I always knew it must come to this! (*Goes up to door during latter part of speech, and opens it.*) Come in, madonna, come in. (*Retires to front of table and curtsies as the* LADY GIOVANNA *enters, then moves chair towards the hearth.*) Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship. 144

[*Lady Giovanna moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* Can I speak with the Count? 146

*Elisabetta.* Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. When he was a little one, and I put the bitters on my breast to wean him, he made a wry mouth at it, but he took it so kindly, and your ladyship has given him bitters enough in this world, and he never made a wry mouth at you, he always took you so kindly — which is more than I did, my lady, more than I did — and he so handsome — and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self — and better late than never — but come when they will — then or now — it's all for the best, come when they will — they are made by the blessed saints — these marriages. 171

[*Raises her hands.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* Marriages? I shall never marry again!

*Elisabetta* (*rises and turns*). Shame on her then!

*Lady Giovanna.* Where is the Count?

*Elisabetta.* Just gone  
To fly his falcon.

*Lady Giovanna.* Call him back and say

I come to breakfast with him.

*Elisabetta.* Holy mother !  
To breakfast ! O sweet saints ! one  
plate of prunes !

Well, madam, I will give your mes-  
sage to him. [*Exit.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* His falcon, and I  
come to ask for his falcon, 180  
The pleasure of his eyes—boast of his  
hand—

Pride of his heart—the solace of his  
hours—

His one companion here—nay, I have  
heard

That, thro' his late magnificence of  
living

And this last costly gift to mine own  
self, [*Shows diamond necklace.*]

He hath become so beggar'd that his  
falcon

Even wins his dinner for him in the  
field.

That must be talk, not truth, but,  
truth or talk,

How can I ask for his falcon ?

[*Rises and moves as she speaks.*]

O my sick boy !  
My daily fading Florio, it is thou 190

Hath set me this hard task, for when  
I say,

What can I do—what can I get for  
thee ?

He answers, 'Get the Count to give  
me his falcon,

And that will make me well.' Yet if  
I ask,

He loves me, and he knows I know he  
loves me !

Will he not pray me to return his  
love—

To marry him ?—(*pause*)—I can  
never marry him.

His grandsire struck my grandsire in  
a brawl

At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd  
him there.

The feud between our houses is the  
bar 200

I cannot cross ; I dare not brave my  
brother,

Break with my kin. My brother hates  
him, scorns

The noblest-natured man alive, and  
I—

Who have that reverence for him that  
I scarce

Dare beg him to receive his diamonds  
back—

How can I, dare I, ask him for his fal-  
con ?

[*Puts diamonds in her casket.*]

*Re-enter COUNT and FILIPPO.* COUNT  
turns to FILIPPO.

*Count.* Do what I said ; I cannot do  
it myself.

*Filippo.* Why then, my lord, we are  
pauper'd out and out.

*Count.* Do what I said !

[*Advances and bows low.*]  
Welcome to this poor cottage, my dear  
lady. 210

*Lady Giovanna.* And welcome turns  
a cottage to a palace.

*Count.* 'T is long since we have met !

*Lady Giovanna.* To make amends  
I come this day to break my fast with  
you.

*Count.* I am much honor'd—yes—  
[*Turns to Filippo.*]

Do what I told thee. Must I do it  
myself ?

*Filippo.* I will, I will. (*Sighs.*)  
Poor fellow ! [*Exit.*]

*Count.* Lady, you bring your light  
into my cottage

Who never deign'd to shine into my  
palace.

My palace wanting you was but a cot-  
tage ;

My cottage, while you grace it, is a  
palace. 220

*Lady Giovanna.* In cottage or in  
palace, being still

Beyond your fortunes, you are still the  
king

Of courtesy and liberality.

*Count.* I trust I still maintain my  
courtesy ;

My liberality perforce is dead  
Thro' lack of means of giving.

*Lady Giovanna.* Yet I come  
To ask a gift.

[*Moves toward him a little.*]  
*Count.* It will be hard, I fear,

To find one shock upon the field when  
all

The harvest has been carried.

*Lady Giovanna.* But my boy—  
(*Aside.*) No, no ! not yet—I cannot !

*Count.* Ay, how is he,

That bright inheritor of your eyes—  
your boy? <sup>231</sup>

*Lady Giovanna.* Alas, my Lord  
Federigo, he hath fallen  
Into a sickness, and it troubles me.

*Count.* Sick! is it so? why, when  
he came last year  
To see me hawking, he was well  
enough;

And then I taught him all our hawk-  
ing-phrases.

*Lady Giovanna.* O yes, and once  
you let him fly your falcon.

*Count.* How charm'd he was! what  
wonder?—A gallant boy,  
A noble bird, each perfect of the breed.

*Lady Giovanna (sinks in chair).*  
What do you rate her at?

*Count.* My bird? a hundred  
Gold pieces once were offer'd by the  
Duke. <sup>241</sup>

I had no heart to part with her for  
money.

*Lady Giovanna.* No, not for money.  
[*Count turns away and sighs.*]

Wherefore do you sigh?

*Count.* I have lost a friend of late.

*Lady Giovanna.* I could sigh with  
you  
For fear of losing more than friend, a  
son;

And if he leave me—all the rest of  
life—

That wither'd wreath were of more  
worth to me.

[*Looking at wreath on wall.*]

*Count.* That wither'd wreath is of  
more worth to me

Than all the blossom, all the leaf of  
this

New-wakening year.

[*Goes and takes down wreath.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* And yet I never  
<sup>saw</sup> <sup>250</sup>  
The land so rich in blossom as this  
year.

*Count (holding wreath toward her).*  
Was not the year when this was  
gather'd richer?

*Lady Giovanna.* How long ago was  
that?

*Count.* Alas, ten summers!  
A lady that was beautiful as day  
Sat by me at a rustic festival  
With other beauties on a mountain  
meadow,

And she was the most beautiful of all;  
Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.  
The mountain flowers grew thickly  
round about.

I made a wreath with some of these;  
I ask'd <sup>260</sup>

A ribbon from her hair to bind it with;  
I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen  
of Beauty,

And softly placed the chaplet on her  
head.

A color, which has color'd all my life,  
Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd  
away;

And presently all rose, and so departed.  
Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on  
the grass,

And there I found it.

[*Lets his hands fall, holding wreath  
despondingly.*]

*Lady Giovanna (after pause).* How  
long since do you say?

*Count.* That was the very year be-  
fore you married.

\**Lady Giovanna.* When I was mar-  
ried you were at the wars. <sup>270</sup>

*Count.* Had she not thrown my  
chaplet on the grass,  
It may be I had never seen the wars.

[*Replaces wreath whence he had  
taken it.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* Ah, but, my lord,  
there ran a rumor then

That you were kill'd in battle. I can  
tell you

True tears that year were shed for you  
in Florence.

*Count.* It might have been as well  
for me. Unhappily

I was but wounded by the enemy there  
And then imprison'd.

*Lady Giovanna.* Happily, however,  
I see you quite recover'd of your  
wound.

*Count.* No, no, not quite, madonna,  
not yet, not yet. <sup>28c</sup>

*Re-enter FILIPPO.*

*Filippo.* My lord, a word with you.  
*Count.* Pray, pardon me!

[*Lady Giovanna crosses, and passes  
behind chair and takes down  
wreath; then goes to chair by  
table.*]

*Count (to Filippo).* What is it,  
Filippo?

*Filippo.* Spoons, your lordship

*Count.*

Spoons!

*Filippo.* Yes, my lord, for was n't my lady born with a golden spoon in her ladyship's mouth, and we have n't never so much as a silver one for the golden lips of her ladyship.

*Count.* Have we not half a score of silver spoons?

*Filippo.* Half o' one, my lord!

*Count.* How half of one? 290

*Filippo.* I trod upon him even now, my lord, in my hurry, and broke him.

*Count.* And the other nine?

*Filippo.* Sold! but shall I not mount with your lordship's leave to her ladyship's castle, in your lordship's and her ladyship's name, and confer with her ladyship's seneschal, and so descend again with some of her ladyship's own appurtenances? 300

*Count.* Why—no, man. Only see your cloth be clean.

[*Exit Filippo.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* Ay, ay, this faded ribbon was the mode  
In Florence ten years back. What's here? a scroll  
Pinned to the wreath.

My lord, you have said so much  
Of this poor wreath that I was bold  
enough  
To take it down, if but to guess what  
flowers  
Had made it; and I find a written  
scroll  
That seems to run in rhymings. Might  
I read?

*Count.* Ay, if you will.

*Lady Giovanna.* It should be if you  
can.

[*Reads.*] 'Dead mountain.' Nay, for  
who could trace a hand 310  
So wild and staggering?

*Count.* This was penn'd, madonna,  
Close to the grating on a winter morn  
In the perpetual twilight of a prison,  
When he that made it, having his right  
hand  
Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his  
left.

*Lady Giovanna.* O heavens! the  
very letters seem to shake  
With cold, with pain perhaps, poor  
prisoner! Well,  
Tell me the words—or better—for I  
see

There goes a musical score along with  
them,

Repeat them to their music.

*Count.* You can touch  
No chord in me that would not answer  
you 321

In music.

*Lady Giovanna.* That is musically  
said.

[*Count takes guitar.* Lady Gio-  
vanna sits listening with wreath  
in her hand, and quietly removes  
scroll and places it on table at the  
end of the song.

*Count (sings, playing guitar).* 'Dead  
mountain flowers, dead moun-  
tain-meadow flowers,  
Dearer than when you made your  
mountain gay,  
Sweeter than any violet of to-day,  
Richer than all the wide world-wealth  
of May,

To me, tho' all your bloom has died  
away,

You bloom again, dead mountain-  
meadow flowers.'

*Enter ELISABETTA with cloth.*

*Elisabetta.* A word with you, my  
lord!

*Count (singing).* 'O mountain  
flowers!' 329

*Elisabetta (louder).* A word, my lord!

*Count (sings).* 'Dead flowers!'

*Elisabetta (louder).* A word, my lord!

*Count.* I pray you pardon me again!

[*Lady Giovanna looking at wreath.*

*Count (to Elisabetta).* What is it?

*Elisabetta.* My lord, we have but  
one piece of earthen-ware to serve the  
salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

*Count.* Why then, that flower'd bowl  
my ancestor

Fetch'd from the farthest east—we  
never use it

For fear of breakage—but this day  
has brought

A great occasion. You can take it,  
nurse! 338

*Elisabetta.* I did take it, my lord,  
but what with my lady's coming that  
had so flurried me, and what with the  
fear of breaking it, I did break it, my  
lord; it is broken!

*Count.* My one thing left of value  
in the world!

No matter! see your cloth be white as snow!

*Elisabetta (pointing thro' window).* White? I warrant thee, my son, as the snow yonder on the very tip-top o' the mountain.

*Count.* And yet, to speak white truth, my good old mother, <sup>350</sup> I have seen it like the snow on the moraine.

*Elisabetta.* How can your lordship say so? There, my lord!

[*Lays cloth.*]

O my dear son, be not unkind to me.

And one word more.

[*Going — returns.*]

*Count (touching guitar).* Good! let it be but one.

*Elisabetta.* Hath she return'd thy love?

*Count.* Not yet!

*Elisabetta.* And will she?

*Count (looking at Lady Giovanna).* I scarce believe it!

*Elisabetta.* Shame upon her then! [*Exit.*]

*Count (sings).* 'Dead mountain flowers' —

Ah well, my nurse has broken  
The thread of my dead flowers, as she  
has broken

My china bowl. My memory is as  
dead [*Goes and replaces guitar.*]  
Strange that the words at home with  
me so long <sup>360</sup>

Should fly like bosom friends when  
needed most.

So by your leave, if you would hear  
the rest,

The writing.

*Lady Giovanna (holding wreath toward him).* There! my lord,  
you are a poet,

And can you not imagine that the  
wreath,

Set, as you say, so lightly on her  
head,

Fell with her motion as she rose, and  
she,

A girl, a child, then but fifteen, how-  
ever

Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice  
of her,

Was yet too bashful to return for  
it?

*Count.* Was it so indeed? was it so?  
was it so? <sup>370</sup>

[*Leans forward to take wreath; and touches Lady Giovanna's hand, which she withdraws hastily; he places wreath on corner of chair.*]

*Lady Giovanna (with dignity).* I did  
not say, my lord, that it was so;  
I said you might imagine it was so.

*Enter FILIPPO with bowl of salad, which he places on table.*

*Filippo.* Here's a fine salad for my  
lady, for tho' we have been a soldier,  
and ridden by his lordship's side, and  
seen the red of the battle-field, yet are  
we now drill-sergeant to his lordship's  
lettuces, and profess to be great in  
green things and in garden-stuff. <sup>379</sup>

*Lady Giovanna.* I thank thee, good  
Filippo. [*Exit Filippo.*]

*Enter ELISABETTA with bird on a dish which she places on table.*

*Elisabetta (close to table).* Here's a  
fine fowl for my lady; I had scant  
time to do him in. I hope he be not  
underdone, for we be undone in the  
doing of him.

*Lady Giovanna.* I thank you, my  
good nurse. <sup>380</sup>

*Filippo (re-entering with plate of prunes).* And here are fine fruits for my  
lady — prunes, my lady, from the tree  
that my lord himself planted here in  
the blossom of his boyhood — and so  
I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's  
pardon, and as your ladyship knows,  
his lordship's own foster-brother,  
would commend them to your lady-  
ship's most peculiar appreciation. <sup>390</sup>

[*Puts plate on table.*]

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Lady Giovanna (Count leads her to table).* Will you not eat with  
me, my lord?

*Count.* I cannot;

Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have  
broken

My fast already. I will pledge you.  
Wine!

Filippo, wine!

[*Sits near table; Filippo brings flask, fills the Count's goblet, then Lady Giovanna's; Elisabetta stands at the back of Lady Giovanna's chair.*]

*Count.* It is but thin and cold,  
Not like the vintage blowing round  
your castle.

We lie too deep down in the shadow  
here.

Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[*They pledge each other and drink.*

*Lady Giovanna.* If I might send  
you down a flask or two <sup>401</sup>  
Of that same vintage? There is iron  
in it.

It has been much commended as a  
medicine.

I give it my sick son, and if you be  
Not quite recover'd of your wound,  
the wine

Might help you. None has ever told  
me yet

The story of your battle and your  
wound.

*Filippo (coming forward).* I can tell  
you, my lady, I can tell you. <sup>409</sup>

*Elisabetta.* Filippo! will you take  
the word out of your master's own  
mouth?

*Filippo.* Was it there to take? Put  
it there, my lord.

*Count.* Giovanna, my dear lady, in  
this same battle

We had been beaten — they were ten  
to one.

The trumpets of the fight had echo'd  
down,

I and Filippo here had done our best,  
And, having passed unwounded from  
the field,

Were seated sadly at a fountain side,  
Our horses grazing by us, when a  
troop, <sup>421</sup>

Laden with booty and with a flag of  
ours

Ta'en in the fight —

*Filippo.* Ay, but we fought for it  
back,

And kill'd —  
*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Count.* A troop of horse —  
*Filippo.* Five hundred!

*Count.* Say fifty!

*Filippo.* And we kill'd 'em by the  
score!

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Filippo.* Well, well, well! I bite  
my tongue.

*Count.* We may have left their fifty  
less by five.

However, staying not to count how  
many,

But anger'd at their flaunting of our  
flag,

We mounted, and we dash'd into the  
heart of 'em. <sup>430</sup>

I wore the lady's chaplet round my  
neck;

It served me for a blessed rosary.

I am sure that more than one brave  
fellow owed

His death to the charm in it.

*Elisabetta.* Hear that, my lady!

*Count.* I cannot tell how long we  
strove before

Our horses fell beneath us; down we  
went

Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled under-  
foot. The night,

As some cold-manner'd friend may  
strangely do us

The truest service, had a touch of  
frost

That help'd to check the flowing of  
the blood. <sup>440</sup>

My last sight ere I swoon'd was one  
sweet face

Crown'd with the wreath. *That*  
seem'd to come and go.

They left us there for dead!

*Elisabetta.* Hear that, my lady!

*Filippo.* Ay, and I left two fingers  
there for dead. See, my lady! (*Show-  
ing his hand.*)

*Lady Giovanna.* I see, Filippo!

*Filippo.* And I have small hope of  
the gentleman gout in my great toe.

*Lady Giovanna.* And why, Filippo?  
[*Smiling absently.*

*Filippo.* I left him there for dead  
too. <sup>452</sup>

*Elisabetta.* She smiles at him — how  
hard the woman is!

My lady, if your ladyship were not,  
Too proud to look upon the garland,

you  
Would find it stain'd —

*Count (rising).* Silence, Elisabetta!

*Elisabetta.* Stain'd with the blood  
of the best heart that ever

Beat for one woman.

[*Points to wreath on chair.*

*Lady Giovanna (rising slowly).* I  
can eat no more!

*Count.* You have but trifled with  
our homely salad,

But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf ;  
Not eaten anything.

*Lady Giovanna.* Nay, nay, I cannot. <sup>461</sup>

You know, my lord, I told you I was troubled.

My one child Florio lying still so sick,  
I bound myself, and by a solemn vow,  
That I would touch no flesh till he  
were well

Here, or else well in heaven, where all  
is well.

[*Elisabetta clears table of bird and salad : Filippo snatches up the plate of prunes and holds them to Lady Giovanna.*

*Filippo.* But the prunes, my lady,  
from the tree that his lordship —

*Lady Giovanna.* Not now, Filippo.

My lord Federigo,  
Can I not speak with you once more  
alone ? <sup>470</sup>

*Count.* You hear, Filippo ? My  
good fellow, go.

*Filippo.* But the prunes that your  
lordship —

*Elisabetta.* Filippo !

*Count.* Ay, prune our company of  
thine own, and go !

*Elisabetta.* Filippo !

*Filippo (turning).* Well, well ! the  
women ! [Exit.

*Count.* And thou too leave us, my  
dear nurse, alone. <sup>479</sup>

*Elisabetta (folding up cloth and going).* And me too ! Ay, the dear  
nurse will leave you alone ; but, for  
all that, she that has eaten the yolk is  
scarce like to swallow the shell.

[*Turns and curtsies stiffly to Lady Giovanna, then exit.* Lady Giovanna takes out diamond necklace from casket.

*Lady Giovanna.* I have anger'd  
your good nurse ; these old-  
world servants

Are all but flesh and blood with those  
they serve.

My lord, I have a present to return you,  
And afterwards a boon to crave of  
you.

*Count.* No, my most honor'd and  
long-worshipt lady,  
Poor Federigo degli Alberighi <sup>490</sup>  
Takes nothing in return from you  
except

Return of his affection — can deny  
Nothing to you that you require of  
him.

*Lady Giovanna.* Then I require you  
to take back your diamonds —  
[Offering necklace.

I doubt not they are yours. No other  
heart

Of such magnificence in courtesies  
Beats — out of heaven. They seem'd  
too rich a prize

To trust with any messenger. I came  
In person to return them.

[Count draws back.

If the phrase

'Return' displease you, we will say —  
exchange them. <sup>500</sup>

For your — for your —

*Count (takes a step toward her and then back).* For mine — and  
what of mine ?

*Lady Giovanna.* Well, shall we say  
this wreath and your sweet  
rhymes ?

*Count.* But have you ever worn  
my diamonds ?

*Lady Giovanna.* No !

For that would seem accepting of your  
love.

I cannot brave my brother — but be  
sure

That I shall never marry again, my  
lord !

*Count.* Sure ?

*Lady Giovanna.* Yes !

*Count.* Is this your brother's order ?

*Lady Giovanna.* No !

For he would marry me to the richest  
man

In Florence ; but I think you know  
the saying —

'Better a man without riches, than  
riches without a man.' <sup>510</sup>

*Count.* A noble saying — and acted  
on would yield

A nobler breed of men and women.  
Lady,

I find you a shrewd bargainer. The  
wreath

That once you wore outvalues twenty-  
fold

The diamonds that you never deign'd  
to wear.

But lay them there for a moment !

[Points to table. Lady Giovanna  
places necklace on table.



And be you  
Gracious enough to let me know the  
boon  
By granting which, if aught be mine  
to grant,  
I should be made more happy than I  
hoped  
Ever to be again.

*Lady Giovanna.* Then keep your  
wreath,  
But you will find me a shrewd bar-  
gainer still.  
I cannot keep your diamonds, for the  
gift  
I ask for, to my mind and at this pre-  
sent

Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.  
*Count.* It should be love that thus  
outvalues all.  
You speak like love, and yet you love  
me not.  
I have nothing in this world but love  
for you.

*Lady Giovanna.* Love? it is love,  
love for my dying boy,  
Moves me to ask it of you.

*Count.* What? my time?  
Is it my time? Well, I can give my  
time  
To him that is a part of you, your  
son.

Shall I return to the castle with you?  
Shall I  
Sit by him, read to him, tell him my  
tales,  
Sing him my songs? You know that  
I can touch

The glittern to some purpose.

*Lady Giovanna.* No, not that!  
I thank you heartily for that — and  
you,  
I doubt not from your nobleness of  
nature,

Will pardon me for asking what I ask.

*Count.* Giovanna, dear Giovanna,  
I that once  
The wildest of the random youth of  
Florence

Before I saw you — all my nobleness  
Of nature, as you deign to call it,  
draws

From you, and from my constancy to  
you.

No more, but speak.

*Lady Giovanna.* I will. You know  
sick people,

More specially sick children, have  
strange fancies,  
Strange longings; and to thwart them  
in their mood  
May work them grievous harm at  
times, may even  
Hasten their end. I would you had a  
son!

It might be easier then for you to  
make  
Allowance for a mother — her — who  
comes  
To rob you of your one delight on  
earth.  
How often has my sick boy yearn'd  
for this!

I have put him off as often; but to-  
day  
I dared not — so much weaker, so  
much worse  
For last day's journey. I was weep-  
ing for him;  
He gave me his hand: 'I should be  
well again

If the good Count would give me —'

*Count.* Give me —  
*Lady Giovanna.* 'His falcon.'

*Count (starts back).* My falcon!

*Lady Giovanna.* Yes, your falcon,  
Federigo!

*Count.* Alas, I cannot!

*Lady Giovanna.* Cannot? Even so!  
I fear'd as much. O this unhappy  
world!

How shall I break it to him? how  
shall I tell him?

The boy may die; more blessed were  
the rags

Of some pale beggar-woman seeking  
alms

For her sick son, if he were like to  
live,

Than all my childless wealth, if mine  
must die.

I was to blame — the love you said  
you bore me —

My lord, we thank you for your enter-  
tainment,

[With a stately curtesy.  
And so return — Heaven help him! —  
to our son.

[Turns.  
*Count (rushes forward).* Stay, stay,  
I am most unlucky, most un-  
happy!

You never had look'd in on me be-  
fore,

And when you came and dipt your  
sovereign head

Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to  
eat with me.

I had but emptiness to set before  
you,

No, not a draught of milk, no, not an  
egg,

Nothing but my brave bird, my noble  
falcon,

My comrade of the house, and of the  
field.

She had to die for it—she died for  
you.

Perhaps I thought with those of old,  
the nobler

The victim was, the more acceptable  
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you  
scarce

Will thank me for your entertainment  
now.

*Lady Giovanna (returning).* I bear  
with him no longer.

*Count.* No, madonna!

And he will have to bear with it as he  
may.

*Lady Giovanna.* I break with him  
for ever!

*Count.* Yes, Giovanna,

But he will keep his love to you for  
ever!

*Lady Giovanna.* You? you? not  
you! My brother! my hard brother!

O Federigo, Federigo, I love you!  
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Federigo!

*Count (impetuously).* Why, then the  
dying of my noble bird

Hath served me better than her living  
—then

[*Takes diamonds from table.*  
These diamonds are both yours and  
mine—have won

Their value again—beyond all mar-  
kets—there,

I lay them for the first time round your  
neck.

[*Lays necklace round her neck.*  
And then this chaplet—No more  
feuds, but peace,

Peace and conciliation! I will make  
Your brother love me. See, I tear  
away

The leaves were darken'd by the bat-  
tle—

[*Pulls leaves off and throws them  
down.*

—crown you  
Again with the same crown my Queen  
of Beauty.

[*Places wreath on her head.*  
Rise—I could almost think that the  
dread garland

Will break once more into the living  
blossom.

Nay, nay, I pray you rise.

[*Raises her with both hands.*  
We two together  
Will help to heal your son—your son  
and mine—

We shall do it—we shall do it!

[*Embraces her.*  
The purpose of my being is accom-  
plish'd,

And I am happy!

*Lady Giovanna.* And I too, Fede-  
rigo.

# THE CUP

## A TRAGEDY

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

GALATIANS	{	SYNORIX, an ex-Tetrarch.	PHOEBE.
	{	SINNATUS, a Tetrarch.	CAMMA, wife of Sinnatus, afterwards
	{	Attendant.	Priestess in the Temple of Artemis.
ROMANS	{	Boy.	Maid.
	{	ANTONIUS, a Roman General.	Nobleman.
	{	PUBLIUS.	Messenger.

### THE CUP

#### ACT I

#### SCENE I. — DISTANT VIEW OF A CITY OF GALATIA.

*As the curtain rises, Priestesses are heard singing in the Temple. Boy discovered on a pathway among Rocks, picking grapes. A party of Roman Soldiers, guarding a prisoner in chains, come down the pathway and exeunt.*

*Enter SYNORIX (looking round). Singing ceases.*

*Synorix.* Pine, beech and plane, oak, walnut, apricot,

Vine, cypress, poplar, myrtle, bowering-in

The city where she dwells. She past me here

Three years ago when I was flying from

My tetrarchy to Rome. I almost touch'd her —

A maiden slowly moving on to music Among her maidens to this temple —

O Gods!

She is my fate — else wherefore has my fate

Brought me again to her own city? — married

Since — married Sinnatus, the tetrarch here —

But if he be conspirator, Rome will chain

Or slay him. I may trust to gain her then

When I shall have my tetrarchy restored

By Rome, our mistress, grateful that I show'd her

The weakness and the dissonance of our clans,

And how to crush them easily. Wretched race!

And once I wish'd to scourge them to the bones.

But in this narrow breathing-time of life

Is vengeance for its own sake worth the while,

If once our ends are gain'd? and now this cup —

I never felt such passion for a woman.

*[Brings out a cup and scroll from under his cloak.]*

What have I written to her?

*[Reading the scroll.]*

'To the admired Camma, wife of Sinnatus the Tetrarch, one who years ago, himself an adorer of our great goddess Artemis, beheld you afar off worshipping in her temple, and loved you for it, sends you this cup rescued from the burning of one of her shrines in a city thro' which he past with the Roman army: it is the cup we use in our marriages. Receive it from one who cannot at present write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN THE ROMAN LEGION.'

*[Turns and looks up to Boy.]*  
Boy, dost thou know the house of Sinnatus?

*Boy.* These grapes are for the house of Sinnatus —

Close to the temple.

*Synorix.*

Yonder?

*Boy.*

Yes.

*Synorix (aside).*

That I

With all my range of women should  
yet shun

To meet her face to face at once! My  
boy,

[*Boy comes down rocks to him.*  
Take thou this letter and this cup to  
Camma,

The wife of Sinnatus.

*Boy.* Going or gone to-day  
To hunt with Sinnatus.

*Synorix.* That matters not.  
Take thou this cup and leave it at her  
doors.

[*Gives the cup and scroll to the Boy.*

*Boy.* I will, my lord.

[*Takes his basket of grapes and exit.*

*Enter ANTONIUS.*

*Antonius* (*meeting the Boy as he goes  
out*).

Why, whither runs the boy?  
Is that the cup you rescued from the  
fire?

*Synorix.* I send it to the wife of  
Sinnatus,

One half besotted in religious rites.

You come here with your soldiers to  
enforce

The long-withholden tribute; you  
suspect

This Sinnatus of playing patriotism,  
Which in your sense is treason. You  
have yet

No proof against him. Now this pious  
cup

Is passport to their house, and open  
arms

To him who gave it; and once there  
I warrant

I worm thro' all their windings.

*Antonius.* If you prosper,  
Our Senate, wearied of their te-  
trarchies,

Their quarrels with themselves, their  
spites at Rome,

Is like enough to cancel them, and  
throne

One king above them all, who shall be  
true

To the Roman; and from what I heard  
in Rome,

This tributary crown may fall to  
you.

*Synorix.* The king, the crown! their  
talk in Rome? is it so?

[*Antonius nods.*

Well — I shall serve Galatia taking it,

And save her from herself, and be to  
Rome

More faithful than a Roman.

[*Turns and sees Camma coming.*

Stand aside, here she comes!

[*Watching Camma as she enters  
with her Maid.*

*Camma* (*to Maid*). Where is he, girl?  
*Maid.* You know the waterfall

That in the summer keeps the moun-  
tain side,

But after rain o'erleaps a jutting rock  
And shoots three hundred feet.

*Camma.* The stag is there?  
*Maid.* Seen in the thicket at the  
bottom there

But yester-even.

*Camma.* Good then, we will climb  
The mountain opposite and watch the  
chase.

[*They descend the rocks and exeunt.*

*Synorix* (*watching her*). (*Aside*). The  
bust of Juno, and the brows and  
eyes

Of Venus; face and form unmatcha-  
ble!

*Antonius.* Why do you look at her  
so lingeringly?

*Synorix.* To see if years have  
changed her.

*Antonius* (*sarcastically*). Love her,  
do you?

*Synorix.* I envied Sinnatus when he  
married her.

*Antonius.* She knows it? Ha!

*Synorix.* She — no, nor even my  
face.

*Antonius.* Nor Sinnatus either?

*Synorix.* No, nor Sinnatus.

*Antonius.* Hot-blooded! I have  
heard them say in Rome,  
That your own people cast you from  
their bounds

For some unprincipally violence to a  
woman,

As Rome did Tarquin.

*Synorix.* Well, if this were so  
I here return like Tarquin — for a  
crown.

*Antonius.* And may be foil'd like  
Tarquin, if you follow

Not the dry light of Rome's straight-  
going policy,

But the fool-fire of love or lust, which  
well

May make you lose yourself, may even drown you

In the good regard of Rome.

*Synorix.* Tut — fear me not; I ever had my victories among women. I am most true to Rome.

*Antonius (aside).* I hate the man! What filthy tools our Senate works with! Still

I must obey them. (*Aloud.*) Fare you well. [*Going.*]

*Synorix.* Farewell!

*Antonius (stopping).* A moment! If you track this Sinnatus

In any treason, I give you here an order [*Produces a paper.*]

To seize upon him. Let me sign it. (*Signs it.*) There —

‘Antonius, leader of the Roman Legion.’

[*Hands the paper to Synorix. Goes up pathway and exit.*]

*Synorix.* Woman again! — but I am wiser now.

No rushing on the game — the net, — the net.

[*Shouts of ‘Sinnatus! Sinnatus!’ Then horn.*]

[*Looking off stage.*] He comes, a rough, bluff, simple-looking fellow.

If we may judge the kernel by the husk,

Not one to keep a woman’s fealty when Assailed by Craft and Love. I’ll join with him;

I may reap something from him — come upon her

Again, perhaps, to-day — her. Who are with him?

I see no face that knows me. Shall I risk it?

I am a Roman now, they dare not touch me.

I will.

*Enter SINNATUS, HUNSMEN and hounds.*

Fair sir, a happy day to you! You reckon but little of the Roman here, While you can take your pastime in the woods.

*Sinnatus.* Ay, ay, why not? What would you with me, man?

*Synorix.* I am a lifelong lover of the chase,

And tho’ a stranger fain would be allowed

To join the hunt.

*Sinnatus.* Your name?

*Synorix.* Strato, my name.

*Sinnatus.* No Roman name?

*Synorix.* A Greek, my lord; you know

That we Galatians are both Greek and Gaul.

[*Shouts and horns in the distance.*]

*Sinnatus.* Hillo, the stag! (*To Synorix.*) What, you are all unfur-nish’d?

Give him a bow and arrows — follow — follow.

[*Exit, followed by Huntsmen.*]

*Synorix.* Slowly but surely — till I see my way.

It is the one step in the dark beyond Our expectation, that amazes us.

[*Distant shouts and horns.*]

Hillo! Hillo!

[*Exit Synorix. Shouts and horns.*]

## SCENE II

### A ROOM IN THE TETRARCH’S HOUSE

*Frescoed figures on the walls. Evening.*

*Moonlight outside. A couch with cushions on it. A small table with a flagon of wine, cups, plate of grapes, etc., also the cup of Scene I. A chair with drapery on it.*

*CAMMA enters, and opens curtains of window.*

*Camma.* No Sinnatus yet — and there the rising moon.

[*Takes up a cithern and sits on couch. Plays and sings.*]

Moon on the field and the foam,

Moon on the waste and the wold,

Moon bring him home, bring him home,

Safe from the dark and the cold,

Home, sweet moon, bring him home,

Home with the flock to the fold —

Safe from the wolf —

(*Listening.*) Is he coming? I thought I heard

A footstep. No, not yet. They say that Rome

Sprang from a wolf. I fear my dear lord mixt

With some conspiracy against the wolf.

This mountain shepherd never dream'd of Rome. [*Sings.*]

Safe from the wolf to the fold —

And that great break of precipice that runs

Thro' all the wood, where twenty years ago

Huntsman and hound and deer were all neck-broken!

Nay, here he comes.

*Enter SINNATUS followed by SYNORIX.*

*Sinnatus (angrily).* I tell thee, my good fellow,

My arrow struck the stag.

*Synorix.* But was it so?

Nay, you were further off; besides the wind 20

Went with my arrow.

*Sinnatus.* I am sure I struck him.

*Synorix.* And I am just as sure, my lord, I struck him.

(*Aside.*) And I may strike your game when you are gone.

*Camma.* Come, come, we will not quarrel about the stag.

I have had a weary day in watching you.

Yours must have been a wearier. Sit and eat,

And take a hunter's vengeance on the meats.

*Sinnatus.* No, no — we have eaten — we are heated. Wine!

*Camma.* Who is our guest?

*Sinnatus.* Strato he calls himself.

[*Camma offers wine to Synorix, while Sinnatus helps himself.*]

*Sinnatus.* I pledge you, Strato.

[*Drinks.*]

*Synorix.* And I you, my lord.

[*Drinks.*]

*Sinnatus (seeing the cup sent to Camma).* What's here?

*Camma.* A strange gift sent to me to-day. 31

A sacred cup saved from a blazing shrine

Of our great Goddess, in some city where

Antonius past. I had believed that Rome

Made war upon the peoples, not the Gods.

*Synorix.* Most like the city rose against Antonius,

Whereon he fired it, and the sacred shrine 37

By chance was burnt along with it.

*Sinnatus.* Had you then

No message with the cup?

*Camma.* Why, yes, see here.

[*Gives him the scroll.*]

*Sinnatus (reads).* 'To the admired Camma, — beheld you afar off — loved you — sends you this cup — the cup

we use in our marriages — cannot at present write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN 'THE ROMAN LEGION.'

Serving by force! Were there no boughs to hang on,

Rivers to drown in? Serve by force? No force

Could make me serve by force.

*Synorix.* How then, my lord?

The Roman is encamp't without your city — 50

The force of Rome a thousand-fold our own.

Must all Galatia hang or drown herself?

And you a prince and tetrarch in this province —

*Sinnatus.* Province!

*Synorix.* Well, well, they call it so in Rome.

*Sinnatus (angrily).* Province!

*Synorix.* A noble anger! but Antonius

To-morrow will demand your tribute — you,

Can you make war? Have you alliances?

Bithynia, Pontus, Paphlagonia?

We have had our leagues of old with Eastern kings.

There is my hand — if such a league there be. 60

What will you do?

*Sinnatus.* Not set myself abroad And run my mind out to a random

guest

Who join'd me in the hunt. You saw my hounds

True to the scent; and we have two-legg'd dogs

Among us who can smell a true occasion,

And when to bark and how.

*Synorix.* My good Lord Sinnatus, I once was at the hunting of a lion.

Roused by the clamor of the chase he woke,

Came to the front of the wood — his monarch mane

Bristled about his quick ears — he stood there <sup>70</sup>

Staring upon the hunter. A score of dogs

Gnaw'd at his ankles; at the last he felt

The trouble of his feet, put forth one paw,

Slew four, and knew it not, and so remain'd

Staring upon the hunter. And this Rome

Will crush you if you wrestle with her; then,

Save for some slight report in her own Senate,

Scarce know what she has done.

(*Aside.*) Would I could move him, Provoke him any way! (*Aloud.*) The Lady Camma,

Wise I am sure as she is beautiful, <sup>80</sup>

Will close with me that to submit at once

Is better than a wholly hopeless war, Our gallant citizens murder'd all in

vain, Son, husband, brother gash'd to death in vain,

And the small state more cruelly trampled on

Than had she never moved.

*Camma.* Sir, I had once A boy who died a babe; but were he

living And grown to man and Sinnatus will'd it, I

Would set him in the front rank of the fight

With scarce a pang. (*Rises.*) Sir, if a state submit <sup>90</sup>

At once, she may be blotted out at once

And swallow'd in the conqueror's chronicle.

Whereas in wars of freedom and defence

The glory and grief of battle won or lost

Solders a race together — yea — tho' they fail,

The names of those who fought and fell are like

A bank'd-up fire that flashes out again

From century to century, and at last May lead them on to victory — I hope

so — <sup>99</sup>

Like phantoms of the Gods. *Sinnatus.* Well spoken, wife.

*Synorix (bowing).* Madam, so well I yield.

*Sinnatus.* I should not wonder If Synorix, who has dwelt three years

in Rome And wrought his worst against his native land,

Returns with this Antonius. *Synorix.* What is Synorix?

*Sinnatus.* Galatian, and not know? This Synorix

Was tetrarch here, and tyrant also — did

Dishonor to our wives.

*Synorix.* Perhaps you judge him With feeble charity; being as you

tell me Tetrarch, there might be willing wives

enough To feel dishonor honor.

*Camma.* Do not say so. I know of no such wives in all

Galatia. <sup>111</sup>

There may be courtesans for aught I know

Whose life is one dishonor. *Enter ATTENDANT.*

*Attendant (aside).* My lord, the men! *Sinnatus (aside).* Our anti-Roman

faction? *Attendant (aside).* Ay, my lord.

*Synorix (overhearing).* (*Aside.*) I have enough — their anti-Roman

faction. *Sinnatus (aloud).* Some friends of mine would speak with me

without. You, Strato, make good cheer till I return. <sup>121</sup>

[*Exit.*] *Synorix.* I have much to say, no time to say it in.

First, lady, know myself am that Galatian

Who sent the cup. *Camma.* I thank you from my heart.

*Synorix.* Then that I serve with Rome to serve Galatia. <sup>122</sup>





Think, — torture, — death, — and come.

*Camma.* I will, I will.  
And I will not betray you.

*Synorix (aside, as Sinnatus enters).*  
Stand apart.

*Enter SINNATUS and ATTENDANT.*

*Sinnatus.* Thou art that Synbrix!  
One whom thou hast wrong'd  
Without there knew thee with Anto-  
nius.

They howl for thee, to rend thee head  
from limb.

*Synorix.* I am much malign'd. I  
thought to serve Galatia.

*Sinnatus.* Serve thyself first, villain!  
They shall not harm

My guest within my house. There!  
(*points to door*) there! this door  
Opens upon the forest! Out, begone!  
Henceforth I am thy mortal enemy.

*Synorix.* However, I thank thee  
(*draws his sword*); thou hast  
saved my life. [*Exit.*]

*Sinnatus (to Attendant).* Return and  
tell them Synorix is not here.

[*Exit Attendant.*]  
What did that villain Synorix say to  
you?

*Camma.* Is he — that — Synorix?

*Sinnatus.* Wherefore should you  
doubt it?

One of the men there knew him.

*Camma.* Only one,  
And he perhaps mistaken in the face.

*Sinnatus.* Come, come, could he  
deny it? What did he say?

*Camma.* What should he say?

*Sinnatus.* What should he say, my  
wife!

He should say this, that being tetrarch  
once

His own true people cast him from  
their doors

Like a base coin.

*Camma.* Not kindly to them?

*Sinnatus.* Kindly?

O, the most kindly prince in all the  
world!

Would clap his honest citizens on the  
back,

Bandy their own rude jests with them,  
be curious

About the welfare of their babes, their  
wives,

O, ay — their wives — their wives!  
What should he say?

He should say nothing to my wife  
if I

Were by to throttle him! He steep'd  
himself

In all the lust of Rome. How should  
you guess

What manner of beast it is?

*Camma.* Yet he seem'd kindly,  
And said he loathed the cruelties that  
Rome

Wrought on her vassals.

*Sinnatus.* Did he, honest man?

*Camma.* And you, that seldom  
brook the stranger here,

Have let him hunt the stag with you  
to-day.

*Sinnatus.* I warrant you now, he  
said he struck the stag.

*Camma.* Why, no, he never touch'd  
upon the stag.

*Sinnatus.* Why, so I said, my arrow.  
Well, to sleep.

[*Goes to close door.*]

*Camma.* Nay, close not yet the door  
upon a night

That looks half day.

*Sinnatus.* True; and my friends  
may spy him

And slay him as he runs.

*Camma.* He is gone already.  
O, look, — yon grove upon the moun-  
tain, — white

In the sweet moon as with a lovelier  
snow!

But what a blotch of blackness under-  
neath!

Sinnatus, you remember — yea, you  
must,

That there three years ago — the vast  
vine-bowers

Ran to the summit of the trees, and  
dropt

Their streamers earthward, which a  
breeze of May

Took ever and anon, and open'd out  
The purple zone of hill and heaven.

There  
You told your love; and like the  
swaying vines —

Yea, — with our eyes, — our hearts  
our prophet hopes

Let in the happy distance, and that all  
But cloudless heaven which we have  
found together

In our three married years ! You kiss'd  
me there  
For the first time. Sinnatus, kiss me  
now.

*Sinnatus.* First kiss. (*Kisses her.*)  
There, then. You talk almost  
as if it

Might be the last.

*Camma.* Will you not eat a little ?

*Sinnatus.* No, no, we found a goat-  
herd's hut, and shared <sup>231</sup>

His fruits and milk. Liar ! You will  
believe

Now that he never struck the stag —  
a brave one

Which you shall see to-morrow.

*Camma.* I rise to-morrow  
In the gray dawn, and take this holy  
cup

To lodge it in the shrine of Artemis.

*Sinnatus.* Good !

*Camma.* If I be not back in half an  
hour,

Come after me.

*Sinnatus.* What ! is there danger ?

*Camma.* Nay,

None that I know ; 't is but a step from  
here

To the Temple.

*Sinnatus.* All my brain is full of  
sleep. <sup>240</sup>

Wake me before you go, I'll after  
you—

After me now ! [*Closes door and exit.*

*Camma* (*drawing curtains*). Your  
shadow. Synorix—

His face was not malignant, and he  
said

That men malign'd him. Shall I go ?  
Shall I go ?

Death, torture—

'He never yet flung back a woman's  
prayer'—

I go, but I will have my dagger with  
me. [*Exit.*

## SCENE III

SAME AS SCENE I. DAWN

*Music and Singing in the Temple.*

*Enter SYNORIX watchfully, after him*  
PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.

*Synorix.* Publius !

*Publius.* Here !

*Synorix.* Do you remember what  
I told you ?

*Publius.* When you cry, 'Rome,  
Rome,' to seize

On whomsoever may be talking with  
you,

Or man, or woman, as traitors unto  
Rome.

*Synorix.* Right. Back again. How  
many of you are there ?

*Publius.* Some half a score.

[*Exeunt Soldiers and Publius.*

*Synorix.* I have my guard about  
me.

I need not fear the crowd that hunted  
me

Across the woods, last night. I hardly  
gain'd

The camp at midnight. Will she come  
to me

Now that she knows me Synorix ?  
Not if Sinnatus <sup>10</sup>

Has told her all the truth about me  
Well,

I cannot help the mould that I was  
cast in.

I fling all that upon my fate, my star.  
I know that I am genial, I would be

Happy, and make all others happy, so  
They did not thwart me. Nay, she will

not come.

Yet if she be a true and loving wife  
She may, perchance, to save this hus-

band. Ay !  
See, see, my white bird stepping

toward the snare.

Why, now I count it all but miracle,  
That this brave heart of mine should

shake me so, <sup>21</sup>  
As helplessly as some unbearded boy's

When first he meets his maiden in a  
bower.

*Enter CAMMA* (*with cup*).

The lark first takes the sunlight on his  
wing,

But you, twin sister of the morning  
star,

Forelead the sun.

*Camma.* Where is Antonius ?

*Synorix.* Not here as yet. You are  
too early for him.

[*She crosses towards Temple.*

*Synorix.* Nay, whither go you now ?

*Camma.* To lodge this cup  
Within the holy shrine of Artemis,

And so return.

*Synorix.* To find Antonius here.

[*She goes into the Temple, he looks*  
*after her.*

The loveliest life that ever drew the  
light

From heaven to brood upon her, and  
enrich

Earth with her shadow! I trust she  
will return.

These Romans dare not violate the  
Temple.

No, I must lure my game into the  
camp.

A woman I could live and die for.  
What!

Die for a woman, what new faith is  
this?

I am not mad, not sick, not old enough  
To dote on one alone. Yes, mad for  
her,

Camma the stately, Camma the great-  
hearted,

So mad, I fear some strange and evil  
chance

Coming upon me, for, by the Gods I  
seem

Strange to myself!

*Re-enter CAMMA.*

*Camma.* Where is Antonius?

*Synorix.* Where? As I said before,  
you are still too early.

*Camma.* Too early to be here alone  
with thee;

For whether men malign thy name, or  
no,

It bears an evil savor among women.

Where is Antonius? (*Loud.*)

*Synorix.* Madam, as you know  
The camp is half a league without the  
city;

If you will walk with me we needs  
must meet

Antonius coming, or at least shall find  
him

There in the camp.

*Camma.* No, not one step with thee.  
Where is Antonius? (*Louder.*)

*Synorix (advancing towards her).*

Then for your own sake,  
Lady, I say it with all gentleness,  
And for the sake of Sinnatus your hus-  
band,

I must compel you.

*Camma (drawing her dagger).* Stay!  
— too near is death.

*Synorix (disarming her).* Is it not  
easy to disarm a woman?

*Enter SINNATUS (seizes him from behind  
by the throat).*

*Synorix (throttled and scarce audible).*

Rome! Rome!

*Sinnatus.* Adulterous dog!

*Synorix (stabbing him with Camma's  
dagger).* What! will you have  
it?

[*Camma utters a cry and runs to  
Sinnatus.*

*Sinnatus (falls backward).* I have it  
in my heart — to the Temple —  
fly —

For my sake — or they seize on thee.  
Remember!

Away — farewell! [*Dies.*

*Camma (runs up the steps into the  
Temple, looking back).* Farewell,

*Synorix (seeing her escape).* The wo-  
men of the Temple drag her in

Publius! Publius! No,  
Antonius would not suffer me to break  
Into the sanctuary. She hath escaped.

[*Looking down at Sinnatus.*  
'Adulterous dog!' that red-faced rascal  
at me!

Then with one quick short stab — eter-  
nal peace.

So end all passions. Then what use in  
passions?

To warm the cold bonds of our dying  
life

And, lest we freeze in mortal apa-  
thy,

Employ us, heat us, quicken us, help  
us, keep us

From seeing us all too near that urn,  
those ashes

Which all must be. Well used, they  
serve us well.

I heard a saying in Egypt, that ambi-  
tion

Is like the sea wave, which the more  
you drink

The more you thirst — yea — drink too  
much, as men

Have done on rafts of wreck — it  
drives you mad.

I will be no such wreck, am no such  
gamester

As, having won the stake, would dare  
the chance

Of double, or losing all. The Roman  
Senate,

For I have always play'd into their  
hands,

Means me the crown. And Camma  
for my bride —

The people love her — if I win her love,  
They too will cleave to me, as one with  
her.

There then I rest, Rome's tributary  
king.

[*Looking down on Sinnatus*  
Why did I strike him? — having proof  
enough

Against the man, I surely should have  
left

That stroke to Rome. He saved my  
life too. Did he?

It seem'd so. I have play'd the sudden  
fool.

And that sets her against me — for the  
moment.

Camma — well, well, I never found  
the woman

I could not force or wheedle to my  
will.

She will be glad at last to wear my  
crown.

And I will make Galatia prosperous  
too,

And we will chirp among our vines,  
and smile

At bygone things till that (*pointing to*  
Sinnatus) eternal peace.

Rome! Rome!

*Enter PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.*

Twice I cried Rome. Why came ye  
not before?

*Publius.* Why come we now? Whom  
shall we seize upon?

*Synorix* (*pointing to the body of Sinnatus*). The body of that dead  
traitor Sinnatus.

Bear him away.

*Music and Singing in Temple.*

## ACT II

SCENE. — INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE  
OF ARTEMIS

*Small gold gates on platform in front  
of the veil before the colossal statue of  
the Goddess, and in the centre of the  
Temple a tripod altar, on which is a  
lighted lamp. Lamps (lighted) sus-  
pended between the pillars. Tripods,  
vases, garlands of flowers, etc., about  
stage. Altar at back close to Goddess,  
with two cups. Solemn music. Priest-  
esses decorating the Temple.*

(*The Chorus of PRIESTESSES sing as  
they enter.*)

Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother, hear  
us, and bless us!

Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to  
the wave, to the glebe, to the fire!

Hear thy people who praise thee! O, help  
us from all that oppress us!

Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O,  
yield them all their desire!

*Priestess* Phœbe, that man from  
Synorix, who has been

So oft to see the priestess, waits once  
more

Before the Temple.

*Phæbe.* We will let her know.

[*Signs to one of the Priestesses, who  
goes out.*

Since Camma fled from Synorix to our  
Temple,

And for her beauty, stateliness, and  
power,

Was chosen priestess here, have you  
not mark'd

Her eyes were ever on the marble  
floor?

To-day they are fixt and bright — they  
look straight out.

Hath she made up her mind to marry  
him?

*Priestess.* To marry him who stabb'd  
her Sinnatus!

You will not easily make me credit  
that.

*Phæbe.* Ask her.

*Enter CAMMA as Priestess (in front of  
the curtains).*

*Priestess.* You will not marry Syn-  
orix?

*Camma.* My girl, I am the bride of  
Death, and only

Marry the dead.

*Priestess.* Not Synorix then?

*Camma.* My girl,  
At times this oracle of great Arte-  
mis

Has no more power than other ora-  
cles

To speak directly.

*Phæbe.* Will you speak to him,  
The messenger from Synorix who  
waits

Before the Temple?

*Camma.* Why not? Let him enter.  
[*Comes forward on to step by tripod.*

*Enter a MESSENGER.*

*Messenger (kneels).* Greeting and health from Synorix! More than once  
 You have refused his hand. When last I saw you,  
 You all but yielded. He entreats you now  
 For your last answer. When he struck at Sinnatus—  
 As I have many a time declared to you—  
 He knew not at the moment who had fasten'd  
 About his throat—he begs you to forget it  
 As scarce his act—a random stroke. All else  
 Was love for you; he prays you to believe him.  
*Camma.* I pray him to believe—that I believe him.  
*Messenger.* Why, that is well. You mean to marry him?  
*Camma.* I mean to marry him—if that be well.  
*Messenger.* This very day the Romans crown him king  
 For all his faithful services to Rome. He wills you then this day to marry him,  
 And so be throned together in the sight Of all the people, that the world may know  
 You twain are reconciled, and no more feuds  
 Disturb our peaceful vassalage to Rome.  
*Camma.* To-day? Too sudden. I will brood upon it.  
 When do they crown him?  
*Messenger.* Even now.  
*Camma.* And where?  
*Messenger.* Here by your temple.  
*Camma.* Come once more to me Before the crowning,—I will answer you. [*Exit Messenger.*]  
*Phoebe.* Great Artemis! O Camma, can it be well,  
 Or good, or wise, that you should clasp a hand  
 Red with the sacred blood of Sinnatus?  
*Camma.* Good! mine own dagger driven by Synorix found  
 All good in the true heart of Sinnatus. But he and I are both Galatian-born;  
 And tributary sovereigns, he and I

Might teach this Rome—from knowledge of our people—  
 Where to lay on her tribute—heavily here  
 And lightly there. Might I not live for that,  
 And drown all poor self-passion in the sense  
 Of public good?  
*Phoebe.* I am sure you will not marry him.  
*Camma.* Are you so sure? I pray you wait and see.  
 [*Shouts (from the distance) 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]  
*Camma.* Synorix, Synorix! So they cried Sinnatus  
 Not so long since—they sicken me. The One  
 Who shifts his policy suffers some thing, must  
 Accuse himself, excuse himself; the Many  
 Will feel no shame to give themselves the lie.  
*Phoebe.* Most like it was the Roman soldier shouted.  
*Camma.* Their shield-borne patriot of the morning star  
 Hang'd at midday, their traitor of the dawn  
 The clamor'd darling of their afternoon!  
 And that same head they would have play'd at ball with  
 And kick'd it featureless—they now would crown!  
 [*Flourish of trumpets.*]  
*Enter a Galatian NOBLEMAN with crown on a cushion.*  
*Noble (kneels).* Greeting and health from Synorix. He sends you  
 This diadem of the first Galatian Queen,  
 That you may feed your fancy on the glory of it,  
 And join your life this day with his, and wear it  
 Beside him on his throne. He waits your answer.  
*Camma.* Tell him there is one shadow among the shadows,  
 One ghost of all the ghosts—as yet so new,  
 So strange among them—such an alien there,  
 So much of husband in it still—that if  
 The shout of Synorix and Camma sitting

Upon one throne, should reach it, it  
would rise —

HE! — HE, with that red star between  
the ribs,

And my knife there — and blast the  
king and me,

And blanch the crowd with horror. I  
dare not, sir!

Throne him — and then the marriage  
— ay, and tell him

That I accept the diadem of Galatia —

[*All are amazed.*]

Yea, that ye saw me crown myself  
withal. [*Puts on the crown.*]

I wait him his crown'd queen.

Noble. So will I tell him. [*Exit.*]

*Music.* Two Priestesses go up the steps  
before the shrine, draw the curtains  
on either side (discovering the God-  
dess), then open the gates and remain  
on steps, one on either side, and kneel.

A priestess goes off and returns with  
a veil of marriage, then assists PHÆBE  
to veil CAMMA. At the same time  
Priestesses enter and stand on either  
side of the Temple. CAMMA and all  
the Priestesses kneel, raise their hands  
to the Goddess, and bow down.

[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!' All rise.*]

Camma. Fling wide the doors, and  
let the new-made children

Of our imperial mother see the show.

[*Sunlight pours through the doors.*]

I have no heart to do it. (*To Phæbe.*)

Look for me!

[*Crouches. Phæbe looks out.*]

[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]

Phæbe. He climbs the throne. Hot

blood, ambition, pride

So bloat and reddens his face — O,  
would it were

His third last apoplexy! O, bestial!  
O, how unlike our goodly Sinnatus!

Camma (*on the ground*). You wrong  
him surely; far as the face goes

A goodlier-looking man than Sinnatus.

Phæbe (*aside*). How dare she say it?

I could hate her for it

But that she is distracted.

[*A flourish of trumpets.*]

Camma. Is he crown'd?

Phæbe. Ay, there they crown him.

[*Crowd without shout, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]

[*A Priestess brings a box of spices  
to Camma, who throws them on  
the altar-flame.*]

Camma. Rouse the dead altar-flame,  
fling in the spices,

Nard, cinnamon, amomum, benzoin.

Let all the air reel into a mist of odor,  
As in the midmost heart of Paradise.

Lay down the Lydian carpets for the  
King.

The King should pace on purple to his  
bride,

And music there to greet my lord the  
King. [*Music.*]

(*To Phæbe.*) Dost thou remember  
when I wedded Sinnatus?

Ay, thou wast there — whether from  
maiden fears

Or reverential love for him I loved,  
Or some strange second-sight, the mar-  
riage-cup

Wherefrom we make libation to the  
Goddess

So shook within my hand that the red  
wine

Ran down the marble and lookt like  
blood, like blood.

Phæbe. I do remember your first-  
marriage fears.

Camma. I have no fears at this my  
second marriage.

See here — I stretch my hand out —  
hold it there.

How steady it is!

Phæbe. Steady enough to stab him!

Camma. O, hush! O, peace! This  
violence ill becomes

The silence of our Temple. Gentle-  
ness,

Low words best chime with this so-  
lemnity.

*Enter a procession of Priestesses and  
Children bearing garlands and golden  
goblets, and strewing flowers.*

*Enter SYNORIX (as King, with gold  
laurel-wreath crown and purple robes),  
followed by ANTONIUS, PUBLIUS,  
Noblemen, Guards, and the Populace.*

Camma. Hail, King!

Synorix. Hail, Queen!

The wheel of Fate has roll'd me to the  
top.

I would that happiness were gold,  
that I

Might cast my largess of it to the  
crowd!

I would that every man made feast  
to-day,

Beneath the shadow of our pines and  
planes!

For all my truer life begins to-day.  
 The past is like a travell'd land now  
 sunk <sup>131</sup>  
 Below the horizon — like a barren  
 shore  
 That grew salt weeds, but now all  
 drown'd in love  
 And glittering at full tide — the boun-  
 teous bays  
 And havens filling with a blissful  
 sea.  
 Nor speak I now too mightily, being  
 King  
 And happy! happiest, lady, in my  
 power  
 To make you happy.

*Camma.* Yes, sir.

*Synorix.* Our Antonius,  
 Our faithful friend of Rome, tho' Rome  
 may set  
 A free foot where she will, yet of his  
 courtesy <sup>140</sup>  
 Entreats he may be present at our  
 marriage.

*Camma.* Let him come — a legion  
 with him, if he will.

(*To Antonius.*) Welcome, my lord  
 Antonius, to our Temple.

(*To Synorix.*) You on this side the  
 altar. (*To Antonius.*) You on  
 that.

Call first upon the Goddess, Synorix.

[*All face the Goddess. Priestesses,  
 Children, Populace, and Guards  
 kneel — the others remain stand-  
 ing.*

*Synorix.* O thou that dost inspire  
 the germ with life,  
 The child, a thread within the house  
 of birth,  
 And give him limbs, then air, and send  
 him forth  
 The glory of his father — thou whose  
 breath  
 Is balmy wind to robe our hills with  
 grass, <sup>150</sup>  
 And kindle all our vales with myrtle-  
 blossom,  
 And roll the golden oceans of our  
 grain,  
 And sway the long grape-bunches of  
 our vines,  
 And fill all hearts with fatness and  
 the lust  
 Of plenty — make me happy in my  
 marriage!

*Chorus (chanting).* Artemis, Arte-  
 mis, hear him, Ionian Artemis!

*Camma.* O thou that slayest the  
 babe within the womb  
 Or in the being born, orafterslayest him  
 As boy or man, great Goddess, whose  
 storm-voice

Unsockets the strong oak, and rears  
 his root <sup>160</sup>

Beyond his head, and strows our fruits,  
 and lays

Our golden grain, and runs to sea and  
 makes it

Foam over all the fledted wealth of  
 kings

And peoples, hear!

Whose arrow is the plague — whose  
 quick flash splits

The mid-sea mast, and rifts the tower  
 to the rock,

And hurls the victor's column down  
 with him

That crowns it, hear!

Who causeth the safe earth to shudder  
 and gape,

And gulf and flatten in her closing  
 chasm <sup>170</sup>

Domed cities, hear!

Whose lava-torrents blast and blacken  
 a province

To a cinder, hear!

Whose winter-cataracts find a realm  
 and leave it

A waste of rock and ruin, hear! I call  
 thee

To make my marriage prosper to my  
 wish!

*Chorus.* Artemis, Artemis, hear her,  
 Ephesian Artemis!

*Camma.* Artemis, Artemis, hear me,  
 Galatian Artemis!

I call on our own Goddess in our own  
 Temple.

*Chorus.* Artemis, Artemis, hear her,  
 Galatian Artemis! <sup>180</sup>

[*Thunder. All rise.*

*Synorix (aside).* Thunder! Ay, ay,  
 the storm was drawing hither  
 Across the hills when I was being  
 crown'd.

I wonder if I look as pale as she?

*Camma.* Art thou — still bent — on  
 marrying?

*Synorix.* Surely — yet  
 These are strange words to speak to  
 Artemis.

*Camma.* Words are not always what they seem, my King.  
I will be faithful to thee till thou die.

*Synorix.* I thank thee, Camma, — I thank thee.

*Camma (turning to Antonius).* Antonius,  
Much graced are we that our Queen  
Rome in you <sup>189</sup>  
Deigns to look in upon our barbarisms.

[*Turns, goes up steps to altar before the Goddess. Takes a cup from off the altar. Holds it towards Antonius. Antonius goes up to the foot of the steps opposite to Synorix.*]

You see this cup, my lord.

*Antonius.* <sup>[*Gives it to him.*]</sup> Most curious!  
The many-breasted mother Artemis  
Emboss'd upon it.

*Camma.* It is old, I know not  
How many hundred years. Give it  
me again.

It is the cup belonging our own Temple.

[*Puts it back on altar, and takes up the cup of Act I. Showing it to Antonius.*]

Here is another sacred to the Goddess,  
The gift of Synorix; and the Goddess,  
being

For this most grateful, wills, thro' me  
her priestess,

In honor of his gift and of our marriage,

That Synorix should drink from his  
own cup. <sup>200</sup>

*Synorix.* I thank thee, Camma, — I thank thee.

*Camma.* For — my lord —  
It is our ancient custom in Galatia  
That ere two souls be knit for life  
and death,

They two should drink together from  
one cup,

In symbol of their married unity,  
Making libation to the Goddess. Bring  
me

The costly wines we use in marriages.

[*They bring in a large jar of wine.*]

*Camma pours wine into cup.*

(*To Synorix.*) See here, I fill it. (*To Antonius.*) Will you drink, my lord?

*Antonius.* I? Why should I? I am  
not to be married.

*Camma.* But that might bring a  
Roman blessing on us. <sup>210</sup>

*Antonius (refusing cup).* Thy pardon, priestess!

*Camma.* Thou art in the right.  
This blessing is for Synorix and for  
me.

See, first I make libation to the Goddess,

[*Makes libation.*]

And now I drink.

[*Drinks and fills the cup again.*]

Thy turn, Galatian King.  
Drink and drink deep — our marriage  
will be fruitful.

Drink and drink deep, and thou wilt  
make me happy.

[*Synorix goes up to her. She hands him the cup. He drinks.*]

*Synorix.* There, Camma! I have  
almost drain'd the cup —

A few drops left.

*Camma.* Libation to the Goddess.  
[*He throws the remaining drops on the altar and gives Camma the cup.*]

*Camma (placing the cup on the altar).*  
Why, then the Goddess hears.

[*Comes down and forward to tripod. Antonius follows.*]

*Antonius,*  
Where wast thou on that morning  
when I came <sup>220</sup>

To plead to thee for Sinnatus's life,  
Beside this temple half a year ago?

*Antonius.* I never heard of this request of thine.

*Synorix (coming forward hastily to foot of tripod steps).* I sought  
him, and I could not find him.

Pray you,

Go on with the marriage rites.

*Camma.* *Antonius —*  
'Camma!' Who spake?

*Antonius.* Not I.

*Phæbe.* Nor any here.

*Camma.* I am all but sure that some  
one spake. *Antonius,*

If you had found him plotting against  
Rome,

Would you have tortured Sinnatus to  
death?

*Antonius.* No thought was mine of  
torture or of death, <sup>230</sup>



But had I found him plotting, I had  
counsell'd him  
To rest from vain resistance. Rome is  
fated  
To rule the world. Then, if he had  
not listen'd,  
I might have sent him prisoner to  
Rome.

*Synorix.* Why do you palter with  
the ceremony?  
Go on with the marriage rites.

*Camma.* They are finish'd.

*Synorix.* How!

*Camma.* Thou hast drunk deep  
enough to make me happy.  
Dost thou not feel the love I bear to  
thee

Glow thro' thy veins?

*Synorix.* The love I bear to thee  
Glow thro' my veins since first I  
look'd on thee. <sup>540</sup>

But wherefore slur the perfect cere-  
mony?

The sovereign of Galatia weds his  
Queen.

Let all be done to the fullest in the  
sight

Of all the Gods.

Nay, rather than so clip  
The flowery robe of Hymen, we would  
add

Some golden fringe of gorgeousness  
beyond

Old use, to make the day memorial,  
when

*Synorix*, first King, *Camma*, first  
Queen o' the Realm,

Drew here the richest lot from Fate,  
to live

And die together.

This pain — what is it? — again?  
I had a touch of this last year — in —  
Rome. <sup>251</sup>

Yes, yes. (*To Antonius.*) Your arm  
— a moment — it will pass.

I reel beneath the weight of utter  
joy —

This all too happy day, crown — queen  
at once. [*Staggers.*]

O all ye Gods — Jupiter! — Jupiter!  
[*Falls backward.*]

*Camma.* Dost thou cry out upon the  
Gods of Rome?

Thou art Galatian-born. Our Arte-  
mis

Has vanquish'd their Diana.

*Synorix (on the ground).* I am poi-  
son'd.

She — close the Temple door. Let her  
not fly.

*Camma (leaning on tripod).* Have I  
not drunk of the same cup with  
thee?

*Synorix.* Ay, by the Gods, of Rome  
and all the world, <sup>261</sup>

She too — she too — the bride! the  
Queen! and I —

Monstrous! I that loved her.

*Camma.* I loved him.

*Synorix.* O murderous mad-woman!  
I pray you lift me

And make me walk awhile. I have  
heard these poisons

May be walk'd down.

[*Antonius and Publius raise him  
up.*]

My feet are tons of lead,  
They will break in the earth — I am  
sinking — hold me —

Let me alone.

[*They leave him; he sinks down on  
ground.*]

Too late — thought myself wise —  
A woman's dupe! Antonius, tell the  
Senate

I have been most true to Rome —  
would have been true <sup>270</sup>

To her — if — if — [*Falls as if dead.*]

*Camma (coming and leaning over  
him).* So falls the throne of an  
hour.

*Synorix (half rising).* Throne? is it  
thou? the Fates are throned, not  
we —

Not guilty of ourselves — thy doom  
and mine —

Thou — coming my way too — *Camma*  
— good-night. [*Dies.*]

*Camma (upheld by weeping Priest-  
esses).* Thy way? poor worm,

crawl down thine own black  
hole

To the lowest hell. Antonius, is he  
there?

I meant thee to have follow'd —  
better thus.

Nay, if my people must be thralls of  
Rome,

He is gentle, tho' a Roman.

[*Sinks back into the arms of the  
Priestesses.*]

*Antonius.*

Thou art one

With thine own people, and though a  
Roman I 280

Forgive thee, Camma.

*Camma (raising herself).* 'CAMMA!'

— why, there again

I am most sure that some one call'd.

O women,

Ye will have Roman masters. I am  
glad

I shall not see it. Did not some old  
Greek

Say death was the chief good? He  
had my fate for it,

Poison'd. (*Sinks back again.*) Have I  
the crown on? I will go

To meet him, crown'd! crown'd victor  
of my will —

On my last voyage — but the wind has  
fail'd —

Growing dark too — but light enough  
to row.

Row to the Blessea Isles! the Blessed  
Isles! — 290

Sinnatus!

Why comes he not to meet me? It is  
the crown

Offends him — and my hands are too  
sleepy

To lift it off (*Phœbe takes the crown off.*)  
Who touch'd me then? I thank

you.

*[Rises, with outspread arms.*

There — league on league of ever-shin  
ing shore

Beneath an ever-rising sun — I see  
him —

'Camma, Camma!' Sinnatus, Sinna-  
tus! [Dies

# THE PROMISE OF MAY

*'A surface man of theories, true to none'*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FARMER DOBSON.  
MR. PHILIP EDGAR (*afterwards* MR. HAROLD).  
FARMER STEER (*DORA and EVA's Father*).  
MR. WILSON (*a Schoolmaster*).  
HIGGINS }  
JAMES } *Farm Laborers.*  
DAN SMITH }  
JACKSON }  
ALLEN }  
DORA STEER.  
EVA STEER.  
SALLY ALLEN } *Farm Servants.*  
MILLY }  
Farm Servants, Laborers, etc.

## THE PROMISE OF MAY

### ACT I

#### SCENE. — BEFORE FARMHOUSE

*Farming Men and Women. Farming Men carrying forms, etc., Women carrying baskets of knives and forks, etc.*

*First Farming Man.* Be thou a-gawin' to the long barn?

*Second Farming Man.* Ay, to be sewer! Be thou?

*First Farming Man.* Why, o' coorse, fur it be the owd man's birthdaäy. He be heighty this very daäy, and 'e telled all on us to be i' the long barn by one o'clock, fur he'll gie us a big dinner, and haäfe th' parish 'll be theer, an' Miss Dora, an' Miss Eva, an' all!

*Second Farming Man.* Miss Dora be coomed back, then?

*First Farming Man.* Ay, haäfe an hour ago. She be in theer now. (*Pointing to house.*) Owd Steer wur afeärd she would n't be back i' time to keep his birthdaäy, and he wur in a tew about it all the murnin'; and he sent me wi' the gig to Littlechester to fetch 'er; and 'er an' the owd man they fell a kissin' o' one another like two sweet-arts i' the porch as soon as he clapt eyes of 'er.

*Second Farming Man.* Follks says he likes Miss Eva the best.

*First Farming Man.* Naäy, I knaws nowt o' what follks says, an' I caäres nowt neither. Follks does n't hallus knaw thessens; but sewer I be, they be two o' the purtiest gels ye can see of a summer murnin'.

*Second Farming Man.* Beänt Miss Eva gone off a bit of 'er good looks o' laäte?

*First Farming Man.* Noä, not a bit.

*Second Farming Man.* Why, coösm awaäy, then, to the long barn. [*Exeunt.*]

DORA looks out of window. Enter DOBSON.

DORA (*singing*).

The town lay still in the low sunlight, 40  
The hen cluckt late by the white farm gate,  
The maid to her daäry came in from the  
cow,  
The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,  
The blossom had open'd on every bough;  
O, joy for the promise of May, of May,  
O, joy for the promise of May!

(*Nodding at Dobson.*) I'm coming down, Mr. Dobson. I have n't seen Eva yet. Is she anywhere in the garden?

*Dobson.* Noä, Miss. I ha'n't seed 'ern either. 50

DORA (*enters singing*).

But a red fire woke in the heart of the town,  
And a fox from the glen ran away with the hen,  
And a cat to the cream, and a rat to the cheese;  
And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite dropt down,  
And a salt wind burnt the blossoming trees;

O, grief for the promise of May, of May,  
O, grief for the promise of May!

I don't know why I sing that song;  
I don't love it.

Dobson. Blessings on your pretty voice, Miss Dora! Wheer did they larn ye that?

Dora. In Cumberland, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. An' how did ye leave the owd uncle i' Coomberland?

Dora. Getting better, Mr. Dobson. But he'll never be the same man again.

Dobson. An' how d' ye find the owd man 'ere?

Dora. As well as ever. I came back to keep his birthday.

Dobson. Well, I be coomed to keep his birthday an' all. The owd man be heightly to-daily, beant he?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson. And the day's bright like a friend, but the wind east like an enemy. Help me to move this bench for him into the sun. (*They move bench.*) No, not that way—here, under the apple-tree. Thank you. Look how full of rosy blossom it is.

[*Pointing to apple-tree.*]  
Dobson. Theer be redder blossoms nor them, Miss Dora.

Dora. Where do they blow, Mr. Dobson?

Dobson. Under your eyes, Miss Dora.

Dora. Do they?

Dobson. And your eyes be as blue as—

Dora. What, Mr. Dobson? A butcher's frock?

Dobson. Noå, Miss Dora; as blue as—

Dora. Bluebell, harebell, speed-well, blue-bottle, succory, forget-me-not!

Dobson. Noå, Miss Dora; as blue as—

Dora. The sky? or the sea on a blue day?

Dobson. Naåy then. I meån'd they be as blue as violets.

Dora. Are they?

Dobson. Theer ye goås agcån, Miss, niver believing owt I says to ye—hallus a-fobbing ma off, tho' ye knows I love ye. I warrants ye'll think moor o' this young Squire Edgar as ha' coomed among us—the Lord knows how—ye'll think more on 'is little finger than hall my hand at the haltar.

Dora. Perhaps, Master Dobson. I can't tell, for I have never seen him. But my sister wrote that he was mighty pleasant, and had no pride in him.

Dobson. He'll be arter you now, Miss Dora.

Dora. Will he? How can I tell?

Dobson. He's been arter Miss Eva, haån't he?

Dora. Not that I know.

Dobson. Did n't I spy 'em a-sitting i' the woodbine harbor together?

Dora. What of that? Eva told me that he was taking her likeness. He's an artist.

Dobson. What's a hartist? I doant believe he's iver a 'cart under his waist-coat. And I tells ye what, Miss Dora: he's no respect for the Queen, or the parson, or the justice o' peace, or owt. I ha' heard 'im a-gawin' on 'ud make your 'air—God bless it!—stan' on end. And wuss nor that. When theer wur a meeting o' farmers at Littlechester t' other daisy, and they was all a-crying out at the bad times, he cooms up, and he calls out among our oån men, 'The land belongs to the people!'

Dora. And what did you say to that?

Dobson. Well, I says, s'pose my pig's the land, and you says it belongs to the parish, and theer be a thousand i' the parish, taåkin' in the women and childer; and s'pose I kills my pig, and g'ies it among 'em, why there wud n't be a dinner for nawbody, and I should ha' lost the pig.

Dora. And what did he say to that?

Dobson. Nowt—what could he say? But I taåkes 'im fur a bad lot

and a burn fool, and I haates the very sight on him. <sup>160</sup>

*Dora (looking at Dobson).* Master Dobson, you are a comely man to look at.

*Dobson.* I thank you for that, Miss Dora, onyhow.

*Dora.* Ay, but you turn right ugly when you're in an ill temper; and I promise you that if you forget yourself in your behavior to this gentleman, my father's friend, I will never change word with you again. <sup>171</sup>

*Enter FARMING MAN from barn.*

*Farming Man.* Miss, the farming men 'ull hev their dinner i' the long barn, and the master 'ud be straänge an' pleased if you'd step in fust, and see that all be right and reg'lar fur 'em afoor he coöm. *[Exit.]*

*Dora.* I go. Master Dobson, did you hear what I said? <sup>179</sup>

*Dobson.* Yeäs, yeäs! I'll not meddle wi' 'im if he doänt meddle wi' meä. *[Exit Dora.]* 'Coomly,' says she. I niver thowt o' mysen i' that waäy; but if she'd taäke to ma i' that waäy, or ony waäy, I'd slaäve out my life fur 'er. 'Coomly to look at,' says she — but she said it spiteful-like. To look at — yeäs, 'coomly;' and she mayn't be so fur out theer. But if that be nowt to she, then it be nowt to me. *[Looking off stage.]* Schoolmaster! Why if Steer han't haxed schoolmaster to dinner, thaw'e knaws I was hallus ageän heving schoolmaster i' the parish! fur him as be handy wi' a booök beänt but haäfe a hand at a pitchfork.

*Enter WILSON.*

Well, Wilson. I seed that one cow o' thine i' the pinfeld ageän as I wur a-coomin' 'ere. <sup>199</sup>

*Wilson.* Very likely, Mr. Dobson. She will break fence. I can't keep her in order.

*Dobson.* An' if tha can't keep thy one cow i' horder, how can tha keep all thy scholarsds i' horder? But let that goä by. What dost a know o' this Mr. Hedgar as be a-lodgin' wi' ye? I coom'd upon 'im t' other daäy lookin' at the coounry, then a-scrattin' upon a bit o' pääper, then a-lookin' ageän; and I taäked 'im fur soom sort o' a land-surveyor — but a beänt. <sup>212</sup>

*Wilson.* He's a Somersetshire man, and a very civil-spoken gentleman.

*Dobson.* Gentleman! What be he a-doing here ten mile an' moor fro' a raäil? We laäys out o' the waäy fur gentlefoälk altogether — leästwaaäys they niver cooms 'ere but fur the trout i' our beck, fur they be know'd as far as Littlechester. But 'e doänt fish neither. <sup>222</sup>

*Wilson.* Well, it's no sin in a gentleman not to fish.

*Dobson.* Noä, but I haates 'im.

*Wilson.* Better step out of his road, then, for he's walking to us, and with a book in his hand.

*Dobson.* An' I haates booöks an' all, fur they puts foälk off the owd waäys.

*Enter EDGAR, reading — not seeing DOBSON and WILSON.*

*Edgar.* This author, with his charm of simple style <sup>231</sup>

And close dialectic, all but proving man  
An automatic series of sensations,  
Has often numb'd me into apathy  
Against the unpleasant jolts of this  
rough road

That breaks off short into the abysses  
— made me

A quietist taking all things easily.

*Dobson (aside).* There muu be summat wrong theer, Wilson, fur I doänt understand it. <sup>240</sup>

*Wilson (aside).* Nor I either, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson (scornfully).* An' thou doänt understand it neither — and thou schoolmaster an' all!

*Edgar.* What can a man, then, live for but sensations,

Pleasant ones? men of old would undergo

Unpleasant for the sake of pleasant ones

Hereafter, like the Moslem beauties waiting

To clasp their lovers by the golden gates. <sup>250</sup>

For me, whose cheerless Hours after death

Are Night and Silence, pleasant ones — the while —

If possible, here! to crop the flower and pass.

*Dobson.* Well, I never 'eärd the likes o' that afoor.

*Wilson (aside).* But I have, Mr. Dobson. It's the old Scripture text, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' I'm sorry for it, for, tho' he never comes to church, I thought better of him. 260

*Edgar.* 'What are we,' says the blind old man in Lear?  
'As flies to the gods; they kill us for their sport.'

*Dobson (aside).* Then the owd man i' Lear should be shaamed of hissen, but noän o' the parishes goäs by that naäme 'ereabouts.

*Edgar.* The gods! but they, the shadows of ourselves,  
Have past for ever. It is Nature kills,  
And not for *her* sport either. She knows nothing.

Man only knows, the worse for him!  
for why 270

Cannot *he* take his pastime like the flies?

And if my pleasure breed another's pain,

Well — is not that the course of Nature too,

From the dim dawn of being — her main law

Whereby she grows in beauty — that her flies

Must massacre each other? this poor Nature!

*Dobson.* Natur! Natur! Well, it be i' *my* natur to knock 'im o' the 'eäð now; but I weänt.

*Edgar.* A quietist taking all things easily — why — 280

Have I been dipping into this again  
To steel myself against the leaving her?

[*Closes book, seeing Wilson.*  
Good day!

*Wilson.* Good day, sir.

[*Dobson looks hard at Edgar.*

*Edgar (to Dobson).* Have I the pleasure, friend, of knowing you?

*Dobson.* Dobson.

*Edgar.* Good day, then, Dobson.

[*Exit.*  
*Dobson.* 'Good daäy, then, Dobson!' Civil-spoken i' deed! Why, Wilson, tha 'eärd 'im thysen — the feller could n't find a Mister in his mouth fur me, as farms five hoonderd naäcre. 294

*Wilson.* You never find one for me, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson.* Noä, fur thou be nobbut schoolmaster; but I taäkes 'im for a Lunnun swindler, and a burn fool.

*Wilson.* He can hardly be both, and he pays me regular every Saturday.

*Dobson.* Yeäs; but I haätes 'im.

*Enter STEER, FARM MEN AND WOMEN.*

*Steer (goes and sits under apple-tree).*  
Hev' ony o' ye seen Eva? 303

*Dobson.* Noä, Mr. Steer.

*Steer.* Well, I reckons they'll hev' a fine cider-crop to-year if the blossom 'owds. Good murnin', neighbors, and the saäme to you, my men. I taäkes it kindly of all o' you that you be coomed — what's the newspaäper word, Wilson? — celebrate — to celebrate my birthdaäy i' this fashion. Niver man 'ed better friends, and I will saäy niver master 'ed better men; fur thaw I may ha' fallen out wi' ye sometimes, the fault, mebbe, wur as much mine as yours; and, thaw I says it mysen, niver men 'ed a better master, and I knaws what men be, and what masters be, fur I wur nobbut a laäbored, and now I be a landlord — burn a plowman, and now, as far as money goäs, I be a gentleman, thaw I beänt naw scholard, fur I 'ednt naw time to maäke mysen a scholard while I wur maäkin' mysen a gentleman, but I ha' taäen good care to turn out boäth my darters right down fine laädies.

*Dobson.* An' soä they be. 329

*First Farming Man.* Soä they be!

*Second Farming Man.* The Lord bless boäth on 'em!

*Third Farming Man.* An' the saäme to you, master!

*Fourth Farming Man.* And long life to boäth on 'em! An' the saäme to you, Master Steer, likewise!

*Steer.* Thank ye!

*Enter EVA.*

Wheer 'asta been? 340  
*Eva (timidly).* Many happy returns of the day, father.

*Steer.* They can't be many, my dear, but I 'oäpes they'll be 'appy.

*Dobson.* Why, tha looks haäle anew to last to a hoonderd.

*Steer.* An' why should n't I last to a

hoonderd? Haåle! why should n't I be haåle? fur thaw I be heichty this very daåy, I niver 'es sa much as one pin's prick of paåin; an' I can taåke my glass along wi' the youngest, fur I niver touched a drop of owt till my oån wedding-daåy, an' then I wur turned huppads o' sixty. Why should n't I be haåle? I ha' plowed the ten-aåcre — it be mine now — afoor ony o' ye wur burn — ye all knaws the ten aåcre — I mun ha' plowed it moor nor a hoonderd times; hallus hup at sunrise, and I 'd drive the plow straåt as a line right i' the faåce o' the sun, then back ageån, a-follering my oån shadder — then hup ageån i' the faåce o' the sun. Eh! how the sun 'ud shine, and the larks 'ud sing i' them daåys, and the smell o' the mou'd an' all. Eh! if I could ha' gone on wi' the plowin' nob-but the smell o' the mou'd 'ud ha' maåde ma live as long as Jerusalem.

*Eva.* Methuselah, father. 371

*Steer.* Ay, lass, but when thou be as owd as me thou'll put one word fur another as I does.

*Dobson.* But, Steer, thaw thou be haåle anew I seed tha a-limpin' up just now wi' the roomatics i' the knee.

*Steer.* Roomatics! Noå; I laåme't my knee last night running arter a thief. Beånt there house-breakers down i' Littlechester, Dobson, — doånt ye hear of one? 382

*Dobson.* Ay, that there be. Immanuel Goldsmith's was broke into o' Monday night, and ower a hoonderd pounds worth o' rings stolen.

*Steer.* So I thowt, and I heard the winder — that's the winder at the end o' the passage, that goås by thy chaumber. (*Turning to Eva.*) Why, lass, what maåkes tha sa red? Did 'e git into thy chaumber? 392

*Eva.* Father!

*Steer.* Well, I runned arter thief i' the dark, and fell ageån coalscuttle and my kneek gev waåy or I 'd ha' cotched 'im, but afoor I coomed up he got thruff the winder ageån.

*Eva.* Got thro' the window again?

*Steer.* Ay, but he left the mark of 'is foot i' the flower-bed; now there be noån o' my men, thinks I to mysen, 'ud ha' done it 'cep it were Dan Smith,

fur I cotched 'im once a-stealin' coåls, an' I sent fur 'im, an' I measured his foot wi' the mark i' the bed, but it would n't fit — seeåms to me the mark wur maåde by a Lunnun boot. (*Looks at Eva.*) Why, now, what maåkes tha sa white? 410

*Eva.* Fright, father!

*Steer.* Maåke thysen eåsy. I'll hev the winder naåiled up, and put Towser under it.

*Eva* (*clapping her hands*). No, no, father! Towser 'll tear him all to pieces.

*Steer.* Let him keep awaåy, then; but coom, coom! let 's be gawin. They ha' broached a barrel of aåle i' the long barn, and the fiddler be theer, and the lads and lassies 'ull hev a dance. 422

*Eva* (*aside*). Dance! small heart have I to dance. I should seem to be dancing upon a grave.

*Steer.* Wheer be Mr. Edgar? about the premises?

*Dobson.* Hallus about the premises!

*Steer.* So much the better, so much the better. I likes 'im, and Eva likes 'im. Eva can do owt wi' 'im; look for 'im, Eva, and bring 'im to the barn. He 'ant naw pride in 'im, and we 'll git 'm to speechify for us arter dinner.

*Eva.* Yes, father! [*Exit.*]

*Steer.* Coom along then, all the rest o' ye! Church-warden be a coomin', thaw me and 'im we niver 'grees about the tithe; and parson mebbe, thaw he niver mended that gap i' the glebe fence as I telled 'im; and blacksmith, thaw he niver shoes a herse to my likings; and baåker, thaw I sticks to hoåm-maåde — but all on 'em welcome, all on 'em welcome; and I 've hed the long barn cleared out of all the machines, and the sacks, and the taåtters, and the mangles, and theer 'll be room anew for all o' ye. Foller me.

*All.* Yeås, yeås! Three cheers for Mr. Steer. 451

[*All exeunt except Dobson into barn.*]

*Enter EDGAR.*

*Dobson* (*who is going, turns*). Squire! if so be you be a squire.

*Edgar.* Dobbins, I think.

*Dobson.* Dobbins, you thinks; and I thinks ye weårs a Lunnun boot.

*Edgar.* Well?

*Dobson.* And I thinks I'd like to take the measure o' your foot.

*Edgar.* Ay, if you'd like to measure your own length upon the grass. <sup>461</sup>

*Dobson.* Coom, coom, that's a good un. Why, I could throw four o' ye; but I promised one of the Misses I would n't meddle wi' ye, and I weant.

[*Exit into barn.*]

*Edgar.* Jealous of me with Eva! Is it so?

Well, tho' I grudge the pretty jewel, that I

Have worn, to such a clod, yet that might be

The best way out of it, if the child could keep

Her counsel. I am sure I wish her happy. <sup>470</sup>

But I must free myself from this entanglement.

I have all my life before me — so has she —

Give her a month or two, and her affections

Will flower toward the light in some new face.

Still I am half-afraid to meet her now. She will urge marriage on me. I hate tears.

Marriage is but an old tradition. I hate Traditions, ever since my narrow father,

After my frolic with his tenant's girl, Made younger elder son, violated the whole <sup>480</sup>

Tradition of our land, and left his heir,

Born, happily, with some sense of art, to live

By brush and pencil. By and by, when Thought

Comes down among the crowd, and man perceives that

The lost gleam of an after-life but leaves him

A beast of prey in the dark, why then the crowd

May wreak my wrongs upon my wrongers. Marriage!

That fine, fat, hook-nosed uncle of mine, old Harold,

Who leaves me all his land at Littlechester,

He, too, would oust me from his will, if I

<sup>490</sup>

Made such a marriage. And marriage in itself —

The storm is hard at hand will sweep away

Thrones, churches, ranks, traditions, customs, marriage

One of the feeblest! Then the man, the woman,

Following their best affinities, will each

Bid their old bond farewell with smiles, not tears;

Good wishes, not reproaches; with no fear

Of the world's gossiping clamor, and no need

Of veiling their desires.

Conventionalism, Who shrieks by day at what she does by night, <sup>500</sup>

Would call this vice; but one time's vice may be

The virtue of another; and Vice and Virtue

Are but two masks of self; and what hereafter

Shall mark out Vice from Virtue in the gulf

Of never-dawning darkness?

*Enter EVA.*

My sweet Eva, Where have you lain in ambush all the morning?

They say your sister, Dora, has return'd,

And that should make you happy, if you love her!

But you look troubled.

*Eva.* O, I love her so, I was afraid of her, and I hid myself. <sup>510</sup>

We never kept a secret from each other;

She would have seen at once into my trouble,

And ask'd me what I could not answer.

O, Philip, Father heard you last night. Our savage mastiff,

That all but kill'd the beggar, will be placed

Beneath the window, Philip.

*Edgar.* Savage, is he? What matters? Come, give me your hand and kiss me



This beautiful May-morning.

*Eva.* The most beautiful May we have had for many years!

*Edgar.* And here is the most beautiful morning of this May. <sup>520</sup>

Nay, you must smile upon me! There — you make

The May and morning still more beautiful,

You, the most beautiful blossom of the May.

*Eva.* Dear Philip, all the world is beautiful

If we were happy, and could chime in with it.

*Edgar.* True; for the senses, love, are for the world;

That for the senses.

*Eva.* Yes.

*Edgar.* And when the man, The child of evolution, flings aside His swaddling-bands, the morals of the tribe,

He, following his own instincts as his God, <sup>530</sup>

Will enter on the larger golden age, No pleasure then taboo'd; for when the tide

Of full democracy has overwhelm'd This Old World, from that flood will rise the New,

Like the Love-goddess, with no bridal veil,

Ring, trinket of the Church, but naked Nature

In all her loveliness.

*Eva.* What are you saying?

*Edgar.* That, if we did not strain to make ourselves

Better and higher than Nature, we might be

As happy as the bees there at their honey <sup>540</sup>

In these sweet blossoms.

*Eva.* Yes; how sweet they smell!

*Edgar.* There! let me break some off for you.

[*Breaking branch off.*

*Eva.* My thanks.

But, look, how wasteful of the blossom you are!

One, two, three, four, five, six — you have robb'd poor father

Of ten good apples. O, I forgot to tell you

He wishes you to dine along with us, And speak for him after — you that are so clever!

*Edgar.* I grieve I cannot; but, indeed —

*Eva.* What is it?

*Edgar.* Well, business. I must leave you, love, to-day.

*Eva.* Leave me, to-day! And when will you return? <sup>550</sup>

*Edgar.* I cannot tell precisely; but —

*Eva.* But what?

*Edgar.* I trust, my dear, we shall be always friends.

*Eva.* After all that has gone between us — friends!

What, only friends? [*Drops branch.*

*Edgar.* All that has gone between us

Should surely make us friends.

*Eva.* But keep us lovers.

*Edgar.* Child, do you love me now?

*Eva.* Yes, now and ever.

*Edgar.* Then you should wish us both to love for ever.

But, if you *will* bind love to one for ever,

Altho' at first he take his bonds for flowers,

As years go on, he feels them press upon him, <sup>560</sup>

Begins to flutter in them, and at last Breaks thro' them, and so flies away for ever;

While, had you left him free use of his wings,

Who knows that he had ever dream'd of flying?

*Eva.* But all that sounds so wicked and so strange;

'Till death us part' — those are the only words,

The true ones — nay, and those not true enough,

For they that love do not believe that death

Will part them. Why do you jest with me, and try

To fright me? Tho' you are a gentleman, <sup>570</sup>

I but a farmer's daughter —

*Edgar.* Tut! you talk Old feudalism. When the great Democracy

Makes a new world —

*Eva.* And if you be not jesting,

Neither the old world, nor the new, nor father,

Sister, nor you, shall ever see me more.

*Edgar (moved).* Then — (*aside*) Shall I say it? — (*aloud*) fly with me to-day.

*Eva.* No! Philip, Philip, if you do not marry me,  
I shall go mad for utter shame and die.

*Edgar.* Then, if we needs must be conventional,

When shall your parish-parson bawl our banns 580

Before your gaping clowns?

*Eva.* Not in our church —  
I think I scarce could hold my head up there.

Is there no other way?

*Edgar.* Yes, if you cared  
To fee an over-opulent superstition,  
Then they would grant you what they call a license

To marry. Do you wish it?

*Eva.* Do I wish it?

*Edgar.* In London.

*Eva.* You will write to me?

*Edgar.* I will.

*Eva.* And I will fly to you thro' the night, the storm —

Yes, tho' the fire should run along the ground,

As once it did in Egypt. O, you see, 559

I was just out of school, I had no mother —

My sister far away — and you, a gentleman,

Told me to trust you — yes, in every thing —

That was the only true love; and I trusted —

O, yes, indeed, I would have died for you.

How could you — O, how could you? — nay, how could I?

But now you will set all right again, and I

Shall not be made the laughter of the village,

And poor old father not die miserable.

*DORA (singing in the distance).*

O, joy for the promise of May, of May,  
O, joy for the promise of May! 601

*Edgar.* Speak not so loudly; that must be your sister.

You never told her, then, of what has past

Between us.

*Eva.* Never!

*Edgar.* Do not till I bid you.

*Eva.* No, Philip, no. [*Turns away.*]

*Edgar (moved).* How gracefully there she stands

Weeping — the little Niobe! What! we prize

The statue or the picture all the more

When we have made them ours! Is she less lovable,

Less lovely, being wholly mine? To stay — 609

Follow my art among these quiet fields,  
Live with these honest folk —

and play the fool!  
No! she that gave herself to me so easily

Will yield herself as easily to another  
*Eva.* Did you speak, Philip?

*Edgar.* Nothing more, farewell.  
[*They embrace.*]

*DORA (coming nearer).*

O, grief for the promise of May, of May,  
O, grief for the promise of May!

*Edgar (still embracing her).* Keep up your heart until we meet again.

*Eva.* If that should break before we meet again?

*Edgar.* Break! nay, but call for Philip when you will,

And he returns.

*Eva.* Heaven hears you, Philip  
*Edgar!* 620

*Edgar (moved).* And he would hear you even from the grave.

Heaven curse him if he come not at your call! [*Exit.*]

*Enter DORA.*

*Dora.* Well, Eva!

*Eva.* O, Dora, Dora, how long you have been away from home! O, how often I have wished for you! It seemed to me that we were parted for ever.

*Dora.* For ever, you foolish child! What's come over you? We parted like the brook yonder about the alder island, to come together again in a moment and to go on together again, till one of us be married. But where is this Mr. Edgar whom you praised

so in your first letters? You have n't even mentioned him in your last? 636

*Eva.* He has gone to London.

*Dora.* Ay, child; and you look thin and pale. Is it for his absence? Have you fancied yourself in love with him? That's all nonsense, you know, such a baby as you are. But you shall tell me all about it. 643

*Eva.* Not now—presently. Yes, I have been in trouble, but I am happy—I think, quite happy now.

*Dora (taking Eva's hand).* Come, then, and make them happy in the long barn, for father is in his glory, and there is a piece of beef like a house-side, and a plum-pudding as big as the round hay-stack. But see, they are coming out for the dance already. Well, my child, let us join them. 654

*Enter all from barn, laughing. Eva sits reluctantly under apple-tree.*

*STEER enters, smoking, sits by Eva.*

*Dance.*

## ACT II

*Five years have elapsed between Acts I. and II.*

SCENE. — A MEADOW. ON ONE SIDE A PATHWAY GOING OVER A RUSTIC BRIDGE. AT BACK THE FARMHOUSE AMONG THE TREES. IN THE DISTANCE A CHURCH SPIRE

DOBSON and DORA.

*Dobson.* So the owd uncle i' Coomberland be dead, Miss Dora, beänt he?

*Dora.* Yes, Mr. Dobson, I've been attending on his death-bed and his burial.

*Dobson.* It be five year sin' ye went afoor to him, and it seems to me nob-but t'other day. Hes n't he left ye nowt?

*Dora.* No, Mr. Dobson. 10

*Dobson.* But he were mighty fond o' ye, warn't he?

*Dora.* Fonder of poor Eva—like everybody else.

*Dobson (handing Dora basket of roses).* Not like me, Miss Dora; and I ha' browt these roses to ye—I forgit what they calls 'em, but I hallus g'ed

soom on 'em to Miss Eva at this time o' year. Will ya taäke 'em? fur Miss Eva, she set the bush by my dairy winder afoor she went to school at Littlechester—so I allus browt soom on 'em to her; and now she be gone, will ye taäke 'em, Miss Dora? 25

*Dora.* I thank you. They tell me that yesterday you mentioned her name too suddenly before my father. See that you do not do so again!

*Dobson.* Noä; I knaws a deal better now. I seed how the owd man wur vext. 32

*Dora.* I take them, then, for Eva's sake.

*[Takes basket, places some in her dress.]*

*Dobson.* Eva's saäke. Yeäls. Poor gell, poor gell! I can't abear to think on 'er now, fur I'd ha' done owt fur 'er mysen; an' ony o' Steer's men, an' ony o' my men 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, an' all the parish 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, fur we was all on us proud on 'er, an' them theer be soom of her oän roses, an' she wur as sweet as ony on 'em—the Lord bless 'er—'er oän sen; an' weänt ye taäke 'em now, Miss Dora, fur 'er saäke an' fur my saäke an' all? 47

*Dora.* Do you want them back again?

*Dobson.* Noä, noä! Keep 'em. But I hed a word to säy to ye.

*Dora.* Why, Farmer, you should be in the hay-field looking after your men; you couldn't have more splendid weather.

*Dobson.* I be a going theer; but I thowt I'd bring tha them roses fust. The weather's well anew, but the glass be a bit shaäky. S'iver we've led moäst on it. 60

*Dora.* Ay! but you must not be too sudden with it either, as you were last year, when you put it in green, and your stack caught fire.

*Dobson.* I were insured, Miss, an' I lost nowt by it. But I weänt be too sudden wi' it; and I feel sewer, Miss Dora, that I ha' been noän too sudden wi' you, fur I ha' sarved fer ye well nigh as long as the man sarved for 'is sweet'art i' Scriptur'. Weänt ye gi'e me a kind answer at last? 72

*Dora.* I have no thought of marriage, my friend. We have been in such grief these five years, not only on my sister's account, but the ill success of the farm, and the debts, and my father's breaking down, and his blindness. How could I think of leaving him? 80

*Dobson.* Eh, but I be well to do; and if ye would nobbut hev me, I would taäke the owd blind man to my oän firsides. You should hev him allus wi' ye.

*Dora.* You are generous, but it cannot be. I cannot love you; nay, I think I never can be brought to love any man. It seems to me that I hate men, ever since my sister left us. O, see here. (*Pulls out a letter.*) I wear it next my heart. Poor sister, I had it five years ago. 'Dearest Dora, — I have lost myself, and am lost for ever to you and my poor father. I thought Mr. Edgar the best of men, and he has proved himself the worst. Seek not for me, or you may find me at the bottom of the river. — Eva.' 100

*Dobson.* Be that my fault?

*Dora.* No; but how should I, with this grief still at my heart, take to the milking of your cows, the fatting of your calves, the making of your butter, and the managing of your poultry?

*Dobson.* Nälly, but I hev an owd woman as 'ud see to all that; and you should sit i' your oän parlor quite like a laädy, ye should! 111

*Dora.* It cannot be.

*Dobson.* And plaäy the pianner, if ye liked, all daäy long, like a laädy, ye should an' all.

*Dora.* It cannot be.

*Dobson.* And I would loove tha moor nor ony gentleman 'ud loove tha.

*Dora.* No, no; it cannot be. 119

*Dobson.* And p'raps ye hears 'at I soomtimes taäkes a drop too much; but that be all along o' you, Miss, because ye weänt hev me; but, if ye would, I could put all that o' one side eäsy anew.

*Dora.* Cannot you understand plain words, Mr. Dobson? I tell you, it cannot be. 128

*Dobson.* Eh, lass! Thy feyther eddicated his darters to marry gentle-föälk, and see what 's coomed on it.

*Dora.* That is enough, Farmer Dobson. You have shown me that, though fortune had born *you* into the estate of a gentleman, you would still have been Farmer Dobson. You had better attend to your hay-field. Good-afternoon. [*Exit.*]

*Dobson.* 'Farmer Dobson!' Well, I be Farmer Dobson; but I thinks Farmer Dobson's dog 'ud ha' know'd better nor to cast her sister's misfortin inter 'er teeth arter she'd been a-readin' me the letter wi' 'er voice a-shaäkin', and the drop in 'er eye. Theer she gös! Shall I foller 'er and ax 'er to maäke it up? Noä, not yet. Let 'er cool upon it; I likes 'er all the better fur taäkin' me down, like a laädy, as she be. Farmer Dobson! I be Farmer Dobson sewer anew; but if iver I cooms upo' Gentleman Hedgar ageän, and döänt laäy my cart-whip athurt 'is shou'lders, why then I beänt Farmer Dobson, but summun else — blaäme 't if I beänt! 156

*Enter HAYMAKERS with a load of hay.*

The last on it, eh?

*First Haymaker.* Yeäs.

*Dobson.* Hoäm wi' it, then.

[*Exit surlily.*]  
*First Haymaker.* Well, it be the last löäd hoäm. 161

*Second Haymaker.* Yeäs, an' owd Dobson should be glad on it. What maäkes 'im allus sa glum?

*Sally Allen.* Glum! he be wuss nor glum. He coom'd up to me yister-daäy i' the haäy-field, when meä and my sweet'art was a-workin' along o' one side wi' one another, and he sent 'im awaäy to t' other end o' the field; and when I axed 'im why, he telled me 'at sweet'arts niver worked well to-gither; and I telled 'im 'at sweet'arts allus worked best to-gither; and then he called me a rude naäme, and I can't abide 'im. 176

*James.* Why, lass, döänt tha know he be sweet upo' Dora Steer, and she weänt sa much as look at 'im? And wheniver 'e sees two sweet'arts to-gither like thou and me, Sally, he be

fit to bust hissen wi' spites and jealousies. <sup>183</sup>

*Sally.* Let 'im bust hissen, then, for owt I cares.

*First Haymaker.* Well, but, as I said afoor, it be the last load hoām; do thou and thy sweet'art sing us hoām to supper—'The Last Load Hoām.' <sup>190</sup>

*All.* Ay! 'The Last Load Hoām.'

SONG.

What did ye do, and what did ye saäy,  
Wi' the wild white rose, an' the woodbine  
sa gaäy,  
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa  
blue—

What did ye saäy, and what did ye do,  
When ye thowt there were nawbody watch-  
in' o' you,  
And you an' your Sally was forkin' the  
haäy,

At the end of the daäy,  
For the last load hoām?

What did we do, and what did we saäy, <sup>200</sup>  
Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa  
graäy,  
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa  
blue—

Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you,  
What we mowt saäy, and what we mowt do,  
When me an' my Sally was forkin' the  
haäy,

At the end of the daäy,  
For the last load hoām?

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,  
Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers at  
plaäy,

An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa  
blue?

Why, coom then, owd feller, I'll tell it to  
you; <sup>210</sup>

For me an' my Sally we sweär'd to be true,  
To be true to each other, let 'appen what  
maäy,

Till the end of the daäy,  
And the last load hoām.

*All.* Well sung!

*James.* Fanny be the naäme i' the  
song, but I swopt it fur *she*.

[*Pointing to Sally.*

*Sally.* Let ma aloän afoor foälk,  
wilt tha? <sup>220</sup>

*First Haymaker.* Ye shall sing that  
ageän to-night, fur owd Dobson 'll  
git us a bit o' supper.

*Sally.* I weänt goä to owd Dobson;  
he wur rude to me i' tha haäy-field,

and he 'll be rude to me ageän to-  
night. Owd Steer's gotten all his  
grass down and wants a hand, and  
I'll goä to him. <sup>229</sup>

*First Haymaker.* Owd Steer g'ies  
nubbut cowl tea to 'is men, and owd  
Dobson g'ies beer.

*Sally.* But I'd like owd Steer's cowl  
tea better nor Dobson's beer. Good-  
bye. [*Going.*

*James.* G'ie us a buss fust, lass.

*Sally.* I tell'd tha to let ma aloän!

*James.* Why, was n't thou and me  
a-bussin' o' one another t' other side o'  
the haäy-cock, when owd Dobson  
coom'd upo' us? I can't let tha aloän  
if I would, Sally.

[*Offering to kiss her.*

*Sally.* Git along wi' ye, do! [*Exit.*

[*All laugh; exeunt singing.*

To be true to each other, let 'appen what  
maäy, <sup>244</sup>

Till the end o' the daäy,  
An' the last load hoām.

*Enter HAROLD.*

*Harold.* Not Harold! 'Philip Edgar,  
Philip Edgar!'

Her phantom call'd me by the name  
she loved.

I told her I should hear her from the  
grave.

Ay! yonder is her casement. I remem-  
ber <sup>250</sup>

Her bright face beaming starlike down  
upon me

Thro' that rich cloud of blossom.  
Since I left her

Here weeping, I have ranged the  
world, and sat

Thro' every sensual course of that full  
feast

That leaves but emptiness.

SONG.

To be true to each other, let 'appen what  
maäy,

To the end o' the daäy,  
An' the last load hoām.

*Harold.* Poor Eva! O my God, if  
man be only

A willy-nilly current of sensations—  
Reaction needs must follow revel—

yet— <sup>261</sup>

Why feel remorse, he, knowing that  
he must have

Moved in the iron grooves of Destiny?  
Remorse then is a part of Destiny,  
Nature a liar, making us feel guilty  
Of her own faults.

My grandfather — of him  
They say, that women —

O, this mortal house,  
Which we are born into, is haunted  
by

The ghosts of the dead passions of  
dead men;

And these take flesh again with our  
own flesh, 270

And bring us to confusion.

He was only  
A poor philosopher who call'd the  
mind

Of children a blank page, a *tabula*  
*rasa*.

There, there, is written in invisible  
inks

'Lust, Prodigality, Covetousness,  
Craft,

Cowardice, Murder' — and the heat  
and fire

Of life will bring them out, and black  
enough,

So the child grow to manhood. Bet-  
ter death

With our first wail than life —

SONG (*further off*).

Till the end o' the daäy, 280  
An' the last löäd hoäm,  
Löäd hoäm.

This bridge again!

(*Steps on the bridge.*)

How often have I stood  
With Eva here! The brook among its  
flowers!

Forget-me-not, meadow-sweet, willow-  
herb.

I had some smattering of science then,  
Taught her the learned names, anatomi-  
zied

The flowers for her — and now I only  
wish

This pool were deep enough, that I  
might plunge

And lose myself for ever. 290

*Enter DAN SMITH (singing).*

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!  
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä  
Thruf sluah an' squad  
When roads was bad,

But hallus 'ud stop at the Vine-an'-the-Hop,  
Fur boäth on 'em knawed as well as my-  
sen

That beer be as good fur 'erses as men.  
Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä! 298  
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä.

The beer's gotten oop into my 'eäd.  
S'iver I mun git along back to the  
farm, fur she tell'd ma to taäke the  
cart to Littlechester.

*Enter DORA.*

*Dora.* Half an hour late! why are  
you loitering here? Away with you  
at once. [*Erit Dan Smith.*]

(*Seeing Harold on bridge.*)  
Some madman, is it,  
Gesticulating there upon the bridge?  
I am half afraid to pass.

*Harold.* Sometimes I wonder,  
When man has surely learnt at last  
that all 310

His old-world faith, the blossom of his  
youth,

Has faded, falling fruitless — whether  
then

All of us, all at once, may not be  
seized

With some fierce passion, not so much  
for Death

As against Life! all, all, into the  
dark —

No more! — and science now could  
drug and balm us

Back into nescience with as little  
pain

As it is to fall asleep.

This beggarly life,  
This poor, flat, hedged-in field — no  
distance — this

Hollow Pandora-box, 320  
With all the pleasures flown, not even  
Hope

Left at the bottom!

Superstitious fool,  
What brought me here? To see her  
grave? her ghost?

Her ghost is everyway about me  
here.

*Dora (coming forward).* Allow me,  
sir, to pass you.

*Harold.* Eva!  
*Dora.* Eva!

*Harold.* What are you? Where do  
you come from?

*Dora.* From the farm  
Here, close at hand.

*Harold.* Are you—you are—that  
Dora,  
The sister. I have heard of you. The  
likeness  
Is very striking.

*Dora.* You knew Eva, then?

*Harold.* Yes—I was thinking of  
her when— O, yes, <sup>330</sup>  
Many years back, and never since  
have met  
Her equal for pure innocence of  
nature,  
And loveliness of feature.

*Dora.* No, nor I.

*Harold.* Except, indeed, I have  
found it once again  
In your own self.

*Dora.* You flatter me. Dear Eva  
Was always thought the prettier.

*Harold.* And her charm  
Of voice is also yours; and I was  
brooding  
Upon a great unhappiness when you  
spoke.

*Dora.* Indeed, you seem'd in trouble,  
sir.

*Harold.* And you  
Seem my good angel who may help  
me from it. <sup>340</sup>

*Dora (aside).* How worn he looks,  
poor man! who is it, I wonder.  
How can I help him? (*Aloud.*) Might  
I ask your name?

*Harold.* Harold.

*Dora.* I never heard her mention  
you.

*Harold.* I met her first at a farm in  
Cumberland—  
Her uncle's.

*Dora.* She was there six years ago.

*Harold.* And if she never mention'd  
me, perhaps  
The painful circumstances which I  
heard—

I will not vex you by repeating  
them—  
Only last week at Littlechester, drove  
me

From out her memory. She has disap-  
pear'd, <sup>350</sup>

They told me, from the farm—and  
darker news.

*Dora.* She has disappear'd, poor  
darling, from the world—  
Left but one dreadful line to say, that  
we

Should find her in the river; and we  
dragg'd

The Littlechester river all in vain,  
Have sorrow'd for her all these years  
in vain.

And my poor father, utterly broken  
down

By losing her—she was his favorite  
child—

Has let his farm, all his affairs, I fear,  
But for the slender help that I can

give, <sup>360</sup>  
Fall into ruin. Ah! that villain, Ed-  
gar,

If he should ever show his face among  
us,

Our men and boys would hoot him,  
stone him, hunt him

With pitchforks off the farm, for all  
of them

Loved her, and she was worthy of all  
love.

*Harold.* They say, we should for-  
give our enemies.

*Dora.* Ay, if the wretch were dead  
I might forgive him;

We know not whether he be dead or  
living.

*Harold.* What Edgar?

*Dora.* Philip Edgar of Toft Hall  
In Somerset. Perhaps you know him?

*Harold.* Slightly.

(*Aside.*) Ay, for how slightly have I  
known myself! <sup>371</sup>

*Dora.* This Edgar, then, is living?

*Harold.* Living? well—

One Philip Edgar of Toft Hall in  
Somerset

Is lately dead.

*Dora.* Dead! is there more than  
one?

*Harold.* Nay—now—not one, (*aside*)  
for I am Philip Harold.

*Dora.* That one, is he then—dead!

*Harold (aside).* My father's death,  
Let her believe it mine; this, for the

moment,

Will leave me a free field.

*Dora.* Dead! and this world  
Is brighter for his absence, as that

other <sup>379</sup>

Is darker for his presence.

*Harold.* Is not this

To speak too pitilessly of the dead?

*Dora.* My five-years' anger cannot  
die at once,

Not all at once with death and him. I trust  
 I shall forgive him — by and by — not now.  
 O sir, you seem to have a heart; if you  
 Had seen us that wild morning when we found  
 Her bed unslept in, storm and shower lashing  
 Her casement, her poor spaniel wailing for her,  
 That desolate letter, blotted with her tears,  
 Which told us we should never see her more —  
 Our old nurse crying as if for her own child,  
 My father stricken with his first paralysis,  
 And then with blindness — had you been one of us  
 And seen all this, then you would know it is not  
 So easy to forgive — even the dead.  
*Harold.* But sure am I that of your gentleness  
 You will forgive him. She you mourn for seem'd  
 A miracle of gentleness — would not blur  
 A moth's wing by the touching; would not crush  
 The fly that drew her blood; and, were she living,  
 Would not — if penitent — have denied him <sup>400</sup> *her*  
 Forgiveness. And perhaps the man himself,  
 When hearing of that piteous death, has suffer'd  
 More than we know. But wherefore waste your heart  
 In looking on a chill and changeless past?  
 Iron will fuse, and marble melt; the past  
 Remains the past. But you are young, and — pardon me —  
 As lovely as your sister. Who can tell  
 What golden hours, with what full hands, may be  
 Waiting you in the distance? Might I call  
 Upon your father — I have seen the <sup>410</sup> world —

And cheer his blindness with a traveller's tales?

*Dora.* Call if you will, and when you will. I cannot

Well answer for my father; but if you can tell me anything of our sweet Eva  
 When in her brighter girlhood, I at least

Will bid you welcome, and will listen to you.

Now I must go.

*Harold.* But give me first your hand;

I do not dare, like an old friend, to shake it. <sup>419</sup>

I kiss it as a prelude to that privilege  
 When you shall know me better.

*Dora (aside).* How beautiful his manners are, and how unlike the farmer's!

You are staying here?

*Harold.* Yes, at the wayside inn  
 Close by that alder-island in your brook,

'The Angler's Home.'

*Dora.* Are you one?

*Harold.* No, but I  
 Take some delight in sketching, and the country

Has many charms, altho' the inhabitants

Seem semi-barbarous.

*Dora.* I am glad it pleases you;  
 Yet I, born here, not only love the country,

But its inhabitants too; and you, I doubt not, <sup>430</sup>

Would take to them as kindly, if you cared

To live some time among them.

*Harold.* If I did,  
 Then one at least of its inhabitants  
 Might have more charm for me than all the country.

*Dora.* That one, then, should be grateful for your preference.

*Harold.* I cannot tell, tho' standing in her presence.

(*Aside.*) She colors!

*Dora.* Sir!

*Harold.* Be not afraid of me,  
 For these are no conventional flourishes.

I do most earnestly assure you that  
 Your likeness —

[*Shouts and cries without.*]



*Dora.* What was that? my poor blind father—<sup>440</sup>

*Enter FARMING MAN.*

*Farming Man.* Miss Dora, Dan Smith's cart hes runned ower a laädy i' the holler laäne, and they ha' ta'en the body up inter your chaumber, and they be all a-callin' for ye.

*Dora.* The body! — Heavens! I come!

*Harold.* But you are trembling. Allow me to go with you to the farm.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter DOBSON.*

*Dobson.* What feller wur it as 'a' been a-talkin' fur haäfe an hour wi' my Dora? (*Looking after him.*) Secäms I ommost knaws the back on 'im—drest like a gentleman, too. Damn all gentleman, says I! I should ha' thowt they'd hed anew o' gentlefoälk, as I telled 'er to-daäy when she fell foul upo' me.<sup>456</sup>

Minds ma o' summun. I could sweär to that; but that be all one, fur I haätes 'im afoor I knaws what 'e be. Theer! he turns round. Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! — Noä — yeäs — thaw the feller's gone and maäde such a litter of his faäce.<sup>464</sup>

Eh lad, if it be thou, I'll Philip tha! a-plaäyin' the saäme gaäme wi' my Dora — I'll Soomerset tha!

I'd like to drag 'im thruff the herse-pond, and she to bea-lookin' at it. I'd like to leather 'im black and blue, and she to be a-laughin' at it. I'd like to foll 'im as deäd as a bullock!<sup>472</sup>

(*Clenching his fist.*)

But what 'ud she saäy to that? She telled me once not to meddle wi' 'im, and now she be fallen out wi' ma, and I can't coom at 'er.

It mun be *him*. Noä! Fur she'd niver 'a' been talkin' haäfe an hour wi' the divil 'at killed her oän sister, or she beänt Dora Steer.<sup>480</sup>

Yeäs! Fur she niver knawed 'is faäce when 'e wur 'ere afoor; but I'll maäke 'er knaw! I'll maäke 'er knaw!

*Enter HAROLD.*

Naäy, but I mun git out on 'is waäy now, or I shall be the death on 'im.  
[*Exit.*]

*Harold.* How the clown glared at me! that Dobbins, is it, With whom I used to jar? but can he trace me Thro' five years' absence, and my change of name, The tan of Southern summers and the beard? I may as well avoid him.

Ladylike!

Lilylike in her stateliness and sweetness!<sup>491</sup>

How came she by it? — a daughter of the fields,

This Dora!

She gave her hand, unask'd, at the farm-gate;

I almost think she half return'd the pressure

Of mine. What, I that held the orange blossom

Dark as the yew? but may not those, who march

Before their age, turn back at times, and make

Courtesy to custom? and now the stronger motive,

Misnamed free-will — the crowd would call it conscience —<sup>500</sup>

Moves me — to what? I am dreaming; for the past

Look'd thro' the present, Eva's eyes thro' hers —

A spell upon me! Surely I loved Eva More than I knew! or is it but the past

That brightens in retiring? O, last night

Tired, pacing my new lands at Littlechester,

I dozed upon the bridge, and the black river

Flow'd thro' my dreams — if dreams they were. She rose

From the foul flood and pointed toward the farm,

And her cry rang to me across the years,<sup>510</sup>

'I call you, Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!

Come, you will set all right again, and father

Will not die miserable.' I could make his age

A comfort to him — so be more at peace With mine own self. Some of my former friends

Would find my logic faulty; let them.

Color

Flows thro' my life again, and I have lighted

On a new pleasure. Anyhow we must Move in the line of least resistance when

The stronger motive rules.

But she hates Edgar.

May not this Dobbins, or some other, spy

Edgar in Harold? Well then, I must make her

Love Harold first, and then she will forgive

Edgar for Harold's sake. She said herself

She would forgive him, by and by, not now—

For her own sake *then*, if not for mine—  
—not now—

But by and by.

*Enter DOBSON behind.*

*Dobson.* By and by—eh, lad, dost a know this paäper? Ye dropt it upo' the road. 'Philip Edgar, Esq.' Ay, you be a pretty squire. I ha' fun' ye out, I hev. Eh, lad, dost a know what tha means wi' by and by? Fur if ye be goin' to sarve our Dora as ye sarved our Eva—then, by and by, if she weänt listen to me when I be a-tryin' to saäve 'er—if she weänt—look to thysen, for, by the Lord, I'd think na moor o' maäkin' an end o' tha nor a carrion craw—noä—thaw they hanged ma at 'Size fur it.

*Harold.* Dobbins, I think!

*Dobson.* I beänt Dobbins.

*Harold.* Nor am I Edgar, my good fellow.

*Dobson.* Tha lies! What hasta been saäyin' to my Dora?

*Harold.* I have been telling her of the death of one Philip Edgar of Toft Hall, Somerset.

*Dobson.* Tha lies!

*Harold* (*pulling out a newspaper*). Well, my man, it seems that you can read. Look there—under the deaths.

*Dobson.* 'O the 17th, Philip Edgar, o' Toft Hall, Soomerset.' How coom thou to be sa like 'im, then?

*Harold.* Naturally enough; for I

am closely related to the dead man's family.

*Dobson.* An' 'ow coom thou by the letter to 'im?

*Harold.* Naturally again; for, as I used to transact all his business for him, I had to look over his letters. Now then, see these (*takes out letters*). Half a score of them, all directed to me—Harold.

*Dobson.* 'Arold! 'Arold! 'Arold, so they be.

*Harold.* My name is Harold! Good day, Dobbins!

*Dobson.* 'Arold! The feller's cleän daäzed, an' maäzed, an' maäted, an' muddled ma. Deääd! It mun be true, fur it wur i' print as black as owt. Naäy, but 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Why, that wur the very twang on 'im. Eh, lad, but whether thou be Hedgar, or Hedgar's business man, thou hes n't naw business 'ere wi' my Dora, as I knows on, an' whether thou calls thysen Hedgar or Harold, if thou stick to she I'll stick to thee—stick to tha like a weasel to a rabbit, I will. Ay! and I'd like to shoot tha like a rabbit an' all. 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Dang tha!

### ACT III

SCENE. — A ROOM IN STEER'S HOUSE.  
DOOR LEADING INTO BEDROOM AT THE BACK.

*Dora* (*ringing a handbell*). Milly!

*Enter MILLY.*

*Milly.* The little 'ymn? Yeäs, Miss; but I wur so ta'en up wi' leädin' the owd man about all the blessed murnin' 'at I ha' nobbut larned mysen haäfe on it.

O man, forgive thy mortal foe,  
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;  
For all the souls on earth that live  
To be forgiven must forgive.  
Forgive him seventy times and seven;  
For all the blessed souls in heaven  
Are both forgivers and forgiven.

But I'll git the book ageän, and larn mysen the rest, and saäy it to ye afoor

dark; ye ringed fur that, Miss, did n't ye?

*Dora.* No, Milly; but if the farming-men be come for their wages, to send them up to me. <sup>20</sup>

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss. *[Exit.*

*Dora (sitting at desk counting money).* Enough at any rate for the present. *(Enter Farming Men.)* Good afternoon, my friends. I am sorry Mr. Steer still continues too unwell to attend to you, but the schoolmaster looked to the paying you your wages when I was away, did n't he?

*Men.* Yeäs; and thanks to ye. <sup>30</sup>

*Dora.* Some of our workmen have left us, but he sent me an alphabetical list of those that remain, so, Allen, I may as well begin with you.

*Allen (with his hand to his ear).* Halfabittical! Taäke one o' the young uns fust, Miss, fur I be a bit deaf, and I wur hallus scaäred by a big word; leästwaäys, I should be wi' a lawyer.

*Dora.* I spoke of your names, Allen, as they are arranged here *(shows book)*—according to their first letters. <sup>42</sup>

*Allen.* Letters! Yeäs, I sees now. Them be what they larns the childer' at school, but I were burn afoor schoolin'-time.

*Dora.* But, Allen, tho' you can't read, you could whitewash that cottage of yours where your grandson had the fever. <sup>50</sup>

*Allen.* I'll hev it done o' Monday.

*Dora.* Else if the fever spread, the parish will have to thank you for it.

*Allen.* Meä? why, it be the Lord's doin', noän o' mine; d'ye think I'd gi'e 'em the fever? But I thanks ye all the saäme, Miss. *(Takes money.)*

*Dora (calling out names).* Higgins, Jackson, Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth! *(All take money.)* Did you find that you worked at all the worse upon the cold tea than you would have done upon the beer? <sup>63</sup>

*Higgins.* Noä, Miss; we worked naw wuss upo' the cowl tea; but we'd ha' worked better upo' the beer.

*Dora.* Come, come, you worked well enough, and I am much obliged to all of you. There's for you, and you, and you. Count the money and see if it's all right. <sup>71</sup>

*Men.* All right, Miss; and thank ye kindly.

*[Exeunt Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth.]*

*Dora.* Dan Smith, my father and I forgave you stealing our coals.

*[Dan Smith advances to Dora.]*

*Dan Smith (bellowing).* Whoy, O lor, Miss! that wur sa long back, and the walls sa thin, and the winders brokken, and the weather sa cowl, and my missus a-gittin' ower'er lyin'-in. <sup>81</sup>

*Dora.* Did n't I say that we had forgiven you? But, Dan Smith, they tell me that you—and you have six children—spent all your last Saturday's wages at the ale-house; that you were stupid drunk all Sunday, and so ill in consequence all Monday that you did not come into the hay-field. Why should I pay you your full wages? <sup>90</sup>

*Dan Smith.* I be ready to taäke the pledge.

*Dora.* And as ready to break it again. Besides, it was you that were driving the cart.—and I fear you were tipsy then, too—when you lamed the lady in the hollow lane. <sup>97</sup>

*Dan Smith (bellowing).* O lor, Miss! noä, noä, noä! Ye sees the holler laäme be hallus sa dark i' the arternoon, and where the big esh-tree cuts athurt it, it gi'es a turn like, and 'ow should I see to laäme the laädy, and meä coomin' along pretty sharp an' all?

*Dora.* Well, there are your wages; the next time you waste them at a pot-house you get no more from me. *(Exit Dan Smith.)* Sally Allen, you worked for Mr. Dobson, did n't you?

*Sally (advancing).* Yeäs, Miss; but he wur so rough wi' ma, I could n't abide 'im. <sup>103</sup>

*Dora.* Why should he be rough with you? You are as good as a man in the hay-field. What's become of your brother?

*Sally.* 'Listed for a soädger, Miss, i' the Queen's Real Hard Tillery.

*Dora.* And your sweetheart—when are you and he to be married? <sup>110</sup>

*Sally.* At Michaelmas, Miss, please God.

*Dora.* You are an honest pair. I will come to your wedding.

*Sally.* An' I thanks ye fur that, Miss, moor nor fur the waage.

(*Going — returns.*) 'A cotched ma about the waist, Miss, when 'e wur 'ere afoor, an' axed ma to be 'is little sweet'art, an' soâ I knaw'd 'im when I seed 'im ageân an' I telled feyther on 'im. 122

*Dora.* What is all this, Allen?

*Allen.* Why, Miss Dora, meâ and my maâtes, us three, we wants to hev three words wi' ye.

*Higgins.* That be 'im, and meâ, Miss.

*Jackson.* An' meâ, Miss. 129

*Allen.* An' we weânt mention naw naâmes, we'd as lief talk o' the divil afoor ye as 'im, fur they says the master goâs cleân off his'eâd when he'eârs the naâme on 'im; but us three, arter Sally'd telled us on 'im, we fun' 'im out a-walkin' i' West Field wi' a white 'at, nine o'clock, upo' Tuesday murnin', and all on us, wi' your leave, we wants to leather 'im.

*Dora.* Who? 140

*Allen.* Him as did the mischief here, five year' sin'.

*Dora.* Mr. Edgar?

*Allen.* Theer, Miss! You ha' naâmed 'im — not me.

*Dora.* He's dead, man — dead; gone to his account — dead and buried.

*Allen.* I beânt sa sewer o' that, fur Sally knaw'd 'im. Now then?

*Dora.* Yes; it was in the Somersetshire papers. 151

*Allen.* Then yon mun be his brother, an' we'll leather 'im.

*Dora.* I never heard that he had a brother. Some foolish mistake of Sally's; but what! would you beat a man for his brother's fault? That were a wild justice indeed. Let bygones be bygones. Go home! Good-night! (*All exeunt.*) I have once more paid them all. The work of the farm will go on still, but for how long? We are almost at the bottom of the well: little more to be drawn from it — and what then? Encumbered as we are, who would lend us anything? We shall have to sell all the land, which father, for a whole life, has been getting together, again, and that, I am sure, would be the death of him. What am I to do?

Farmer Dobson, were I to marry him, has promised to keep our heads above water; and the man has doubtless a good heart, and a true and lasting love for me; yet — though I can be sorry for him — as the good Sally says, 'I can't abide him' — almost brutal, and matched with my Harold is like a hedge thistle by a garden rose. But then, he, too — will he ever be of one faith with his wife? which is my dream of a true marriage. Can I fancy him kneeling with me, and uttering the same prayer; standing up side by side with me, and singing the same hymn? I fear not. Have I done wisely, then, in accepting him? But may not a girl's love-dream have too much romance in it to be realized all at once, or altogether, or anywhere but in heaven? And yet I had once a vision of a pure and perfect marriage, where the man and the woman, only differing as the stronger and the weaker, should walk hand in hand together down this valley of tears, as they call it so truly, to the grave at the bottom, and lie down there together in the darkness which would seem but for a moment, to be wakened again together by the light of the resurrection, and no more partings for ever and for ever. (*Walks up and down. She sings.*) 203

O happy lark, that warblest high  
Above thy lowly nest,  
O brook, that brawlest merrily by  
Thro' fields that once were blest,  
O tower spiring to the sky,  
O graves in daisies drest,  
O Love and Life, how weary am I, 210  
And how I long for rest!

There, there, I am a fool! Tears! I have sometimes been moved to tears by a chapter of fine writing in a novel; but what have I to do with tears now? All depends on me — father, this poor girl, the farm, everything; and they both love me — I am all in all to both; and he loves me too, I am quite sure of that. Courage, courage! and all will go well. (*Goes to bedroom door; opens it.*) How dark your room is! Let me bring you in here where there is still full daylight. (*Brings Eva forward.*) Why, you look better. 225

*Eva.* And I feel so much better that

I trust I may be able by and by to help you in the business of the farm; but I must not be known yet. Has any one found me out, Dora? <sup>230</sup>

*Dora.* O, no; you kept your veil too close for that when they carried you in; since then, no one has seen you but myself.

*Eva.* Yes — this Milly.

*Dora.* Poor blind father's little guide, Milly, who came to us three years after you were gone, how should she know you? But now that you have been brought to us as it were from the grave, dearest Eva, and have been here so long, will you not speak with father to-day? <sup>243</sup>

*Eva.* Do you think that I may? No, not yet. I am not equal to it yet.

*Dora.* Why? Do you still suffer from your fall in the hollow lane?

*Eva.* Bruised; but no bones broken.

*Dora.* I have always told father that the huge old ash-tree there would cause an accident some day; but he would never cut it down, because one of the Steers had planted it there in former times. <sup>254</sup>

*Eva.* If it had killed one of the Steers there the other day, it might have been better for her, for him, and for you.

*Dora.* Come, come, keep a good heart! Better for me! that's good. How better for me? <sup>261</sup>

*Eva.* You tell me you have a lover. Will he not fly from you if he learn the story of my shame and that I am still living?

*Dora.* No; I am sure that when we are married he will be willing that you and father should live with us; for, indeed, he tells me that he met you once in the old times, and was much taken with you, my dear. <sup>271</sup>

*Eva.* Taken with me; who was he? Have you told him I am here?

*Dora.* No; do you wish it?

*Eva.* See, Dora; you yourself are ashamed of me (*weeps*), and I do not wonder at it. <sup>277</sup>

*Dora.* But I should wonder at myself if it were so. Have we not been all in all to one another from the time when we first peeped into the bird's nest, waded in the brook, ran after the

butterflies, and prattled to each other that we would marry fine gentlemen, and played at being fine ladies?

*Eva.* That last was my father's fault, poor man. And this lover of yours — this Mr. Harold — is a gentleman? <sup>289</sup>

*Dora.* That he is, from head to foot. I do believe I lost my heart to him the very first time we met, and I love him so much —

*Eva.* Poor Dora!

*Dora.* That I dare not tell him how much I love him.

*Eva.* Better not. Has he offered you marriage, this gentleman?

*Dora.* Could I love him else? <sup>299</sup>

*Eva.* And are you quite sure that after marriage this gentleman will not be ashamed of his poor farmer's daughter among the ladies in his drawing-room?

*Dora.* Shamed of me in a drawing-room! Was n't Miss Vavasour, our schoolmistress at Littlechester, a lady born? Were not our fellow-pupils all ladies? Wasn't dear mother herself at least by one side a lady? Can't I speak like a lady; pen a letter like a lady; talk a little French like a lady; play a little like a lady? Can't a girl when she loves her husband, and he her, make herself anything he wishes her to be? Shamed of me in a drawing-room, indeed! See here! 'I hope your lordship is quite recovered of your gout?' (*Curtseys.*) 'Will your ladyship ride to cover to-day?' (*Curtseys.*) 'I can recommend our Voltigeur.' 'I am sorry that we could not attend your grace's party on the 10th!' (*Curtseys.*) 'There, I am glad my nonsense has made you smile!' <sup>325</sup>

*Eva.* I have heard that 'your lordship,' and 'your ladyship,' and 'your grace' are all growing old-fashioned!

*Dora.* But the love of sister for sister can never be old-fashioned. I have been unwilling to trouble you with questions, but you seem somewhat better to-day. We found a letter in your bedroom torn into bits I could n't make it out. What was it? <sup>336</sup>

*Eva.* From him! from him! He said we had been most happy to-

gether, and he trusted that some time we should meet again, for he had not forgotten his promise to come when I called him. But that was a mockery, you know, for he gave me no address, and there was no word of marriage; and, O Dora, he signed himself 'Yours gratefully'—fancy, Dora,—'gratefully'! 'Yours gratefully'!

*Dora.* Infamous wretch! (*Aside.*) Shall I tell her he is dead? No; she is still too feeble. 350

*Eva.* Hark! Dora, some one is coming. I cannot and I will not see anybody.

*Dora.* It is only Milly.

*Enter MILLY, with basket of roses.*

Well, Milly, why do you come in so roughly? The sick lady here might have been asleep.

*Milly.* Please, Miss, Mr. Dobson told me to say he's browt some of Miss Eva's roses for the sick lady to smell on. 361

*Dora.* Take them, dear. Say that the sick lady thanks him! Is he here?

*Milly.* Yeas, Miss; and he wants to speak to ye partic'lar.

*Dora.* Tell him I cannot leave the sick lady just yet.

*Milly.* Yeas, Miss; but he says he wants to tell ye summut very partic'lar. 370

*Dora.* Not to-day. What are you staying for?

*Milly.* Why, Miss, I be afeard I shall set him a-sweering like onythink.

*Dora.* And what harm will that do you, so that you do not copy his bad manners? Go, child. (*Exit Milly.*) But, Eva, why did you write 'Seek me at the bottom of the river'? 379

*Eva.* Why? because I meant it!—that dreadful night! that lonely walk to Littlechester, the rain beating in my face all the way, dead midnight when I came upon the bridge; the river, black, slimy, swirling under me in the lamplight, by the rotten wharfs—but I was so mad that I mounted upon the parapet—

*Dora.* You make me shudder! 389

*Eva.* To fling myself over, when I heard a voice, 'Girl, what are you doing there?' It was a Sister of Mercy, come from the death-bed of a pauper,

who had died in his misery blessing God, and the Sister took me to her house, and bit by bit—for she promised secrecy—I told her all.

*Dora.* And what then? 398

*Eva.* She would have persuaded me to come back here, but I could n't. Then she got me a place as nursery governess, and when the children grew too old for me, and I asked her once more to help me, once more she said, 'Go home;' but I had n't the heart or face to do it. And then—what would father say?—I sank so low that I went into service—the drudge of a lodging-house—and when the mistress died, and I appealed to the Sister again, her answer—I think I have it about me—yes, there it is! 412

*Dora (reads).* 'My dear Child,—I can do no more for you. I have done wrong in keeping your secret; your father must be now in extreme old age. Go back to him and ask his forgiveness before he dies. SISTER AGATHA.' Sister Agatha is right. Don't you long for father's forgiveness? 421

*Eva.* I would almost die to have it!

*Dora.* And he may die before he gives it; may drop off any day, any hour. You must see him at once. (*Rings bell. Enter Milly.*) Milly, my dear, how did you leave Mr. Steer?

*Milly.* He's been a-moanin' and a-groanin' in 'is sleep, but I thinks he be wakkenin' oop. 430

*Dora.* Tell him that I and the lady here wish to see him. You see she is lamed, and cannot go down to him.

*Milly.* Yeas, Miss, I will.

[*Exit Milly.*]

*Dora.* I ought to prepare you. You must not expect to find our father as he was five years ago. He is much altered; but I trust that your return—for you know, my dear, you were always his favorite—will give him, as they say, a new lease of life. 441

*Eva (clinging to Dora).* O, Dora, Dora!

*Enter STEER led by MILLY.*

*Steer.* Hes the cow cawved?

*Dora.* No, father.

*Steer.* Be the colt dead?

*Dora.* No, father.

*Steer.* He wur sa bellows'd out wi' the wind this mornin', 'at I tell'd 'em to gallop 'im. Be he deid? 450

*Dora.* Not that I know.

*Steer.* What hasta sent fur me, then, fur?

*Dora (taking Steer's arm).* Well, father, I have a surprise for you.

*Steer.* I ha' niver been surprised but once i' my life, and I went blind upon it.

*Dora.* Eva has come home.

*Steer.* Hoam? fro' the bottom o' the river?

*Dora.* No, father, that was a mistake. She's here again. 463

*Steer.* The Steers was all gentle-folks i' the owd times, an' I worked early an' laite to maake 'em all gentlefolks ageän. The land belonged to the Steers i' the owd times, an' it belongs to the Steers ageän: I bowt it back ageän; but I could n't buy my darter back ageän when she lost hersen, could I? I eddicated boath on 'em to marry gentlemen, an' one on 'em went an' lost hersen i' the river.

*Dora.* No, father, she's here. 475

*Steer.* Here! she moant coom here. What would her mother say? If it be her ghöäst, we mun abide it. We can't keep a ghöäst out.

*Eva (falling at his feet).* O, forgive me! forgive me! 481

*Steer.* Who said that? Taäke me awaay, little gell. It be one o' my bad daäys.

[*Exit Steer led by Milly.*]

*Dora (smoothing Eva's forehead).* Be not so cast down, my sweet Eva. You heard him say it was one of his bad days. He will be sure to know you to-morrow. 489

*Eva.* It is almost the last of my bad days, I think. I am very faint. I must lie down. Give me your arm. Lead me back again.

[*Dora takes Eva into inner room.*]

*Enter MILLY.*

*Milly.* Miss Dora! Miss Dora!

*Dora (returning and leaving the bedroom door ajar).* Quiet! Quiet! What is it?

*Milly.* Mr. 'Arold, Miss.

*Dora.* Below? 499

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss. He be saäyin' a word to the öwd man, but he 'll coom up if ye lets 'im.

*Dora.* Tell him, then, that I'm waiting for him.

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss. [*Exit.*  
[*Dora sits pensively and waits.*]

*Enter HAROLD.*

*Harold.* You are pale, my Dora! but the ruddiest cheek

That ever charm'd the plowman of your wolds

Might wish its rose a lily, could it look But half as lovely. I was speaking with

Your father, asking his consent — you wish'd me — 510

That we should marry. He would answer nothing,

I could make nothing of him; but, my flower,

You look so weary and so worn! What is it

Has put you out of heart?

*Dora.* It puts me in heart Again to see you; but indeed the state Of my poor father puts me out of heart. Is yours yet living?

*Harold.* No — I told you.

*Dora.* When?

*Harold.* Confusion! — Ah well, well! the state we all

Must come to in our spring-and-winter world

If we live long enough! and poor Steer looks 520

The very type of Age in a picture, bow'd

To the earth he came from, to the grave he goes to,

Beneath the burthen of years.

*Dora.* More like the picture Of Christian in my 'Pilgrim's Progress' here,

Bow'd to the dust beneath the burthen of sin.

*Harold.* Sin! What sin?

*Dora.* Not his own.

*Harold.* That nursery-tale

Still read, then?

*Dora.* Yes; our carters and our shepherds

Still find a comfort there.

*Harold.* Carters and shepherds!

*Dora.* Scorn! I hate scorn. A soul with no religion —

My mother used to say that such a  
one <sup>530</sup>

Was without rudder, anchor, compass  
— might be

Blown every way with every gust and  
wreck

On any rock; and tho' you are good  
and gentle,

Yet if thro' any want —

*Harold.* Of this religion?  
Child, read a little history, you will  
find

The common brotherhood of man has  
been

Wrong'd by the cruelties of his reli-  
gions

More than could ever have happen'd  
thro' the want

Of any or all of them.

*Dora.* But, O dear friend,  
If thro' the want of any — I mean the  
true one — <sup>540</sup>

And pardon me for saying it — you  
should ever

Be tempted into doing what might  
seem

Not altogether worthy of you, I think  
That I should break my heart, for you  
have taught me

To love you.

*Harold.* What is this? some one  
been stirring

Against me? he, your rustic amorist,  
The polish'd Damon of your pastoral  
here,

This Dobson of your idyll?

*Dora.* No, sir, no!  
Did you not tell me he was crazed  
with jealousy,

Had threaten'd even your life, and  
would say anything?

Did I not promise not to listen to him,  
Nor even to see the man? <sup>550</sup>

*Harold.* Good; then what is it  
That makes you talk so dolefully?

*Dora.* I told you —  
My father. Well, indeed, a friend just  
now,

One that has been much wrong'd,  
whose griefs are mine,

Was warning me that if a gentleman  
Should wed a farmer's daughter, he  
would be

Sooner or later shamed of her among  
The ladies, born his equals.

*Harold.* More fool he!

What, I that have been call'd a So-  
cialist, <sup>560</sup>

A Communist, a Nihilist — what you  
will! —

*Dora.* What are all these?

*Harold.* Utopian idiotcies.  
They did not last three Junes. Such  
rampant weeds

Strangle each other, die, and make the  
soil

For Cæsars, Cromwells, and Napoleons  
To root their power in. I have freed  
myself

From all such dreams, and some will  
say because

I have inherited my uncle. Let them.  
But — shamed of you, my empress! I  
should prize <sup>569</sup>

The pearl of beauty, even if I found it,  
Dark with the soot of slums.

*Dora.* But I can tell you,  
We Steers are of old blood, tho' we be  
fallen.

See there our shield. (*Pointing to arms  
on mantelpiece.*)

For I have heard the Steers  
Had land in Saxon times; and your  
own name

Of Harold sounds so English and so  
old

I am sure you must be proud of it.

*Harold.* Not I!  
As yet I scarcely feel it mine. I took  
it

For some three thousand acres. I have  
land now

And wealth, and lay both at your feet.

*Dora.* And what was  
Your name before?

*Harold.* Come, come, my girl,  
enough <sup>580</sup>

Of this strange talk. I love you, and  
you me.

True, I have held opinions, hold some  
still,

Which you would scarce approve of;  
for all that,

I am a man not prone to jealousies,  
Caprices, humors, moods, but very  
ready

To make allowances, and mighty slow  
To feel offences. Nay, I do believe  
I could forgive — well, almost any-  
thing —

And that more freely than your formal  
priest,



Because I know more fully than *he* can  
What poor earthworms are all and  
each of us,

Here crawling in this boundless Na-  
ture. *Dora*,

If marriage ever brought a woman  
happiness

I doubt not I can make you happy.

*Dora*. You make me  
Happy already.

*Harold*. And I never said  
As much before to any woman living.

*Dora*. No?

*Harold*. No! by this true kiss, *you*  
are the first

I ever have loved truly.

[*They kiss each other.*]

*Eva* (with a wild cry). Philip Edgar!

*Harold*. The phantom cry! *You*—  
did you hear a cry?

*Dora*. She must be crying out 'Ed-  
gar' in her sleep.

*Harold*. Who must be crying out  
'Edgar' in her sleep?

*Dora*. Your pardon for a minute.  
She must be waked.

*Harold*. Who must be waked?

*Dora*. I am not deaf; you fright  
me.

What ails you?

*Harold*. Speak.

*Dora*. You know her, *Eva*.

*Harold*. *Eva*!

[*Eva opens the door and stands in  
the entry.*]

She!

*Eva*. Make her happy, then, and I  
forgive you.

*Dora*. Happy! What? Edgar? Is it  
so? Can it be?

They told me so. Yes, yes! I see it all  
now.

O, she has fainted! Sister, *Eva*, sister!  
He is yours again—he will love *you*  
again;

I give him back to you again. Look  
up!

One word, or do but smile! Sweet, do  
you hear me?

[*Puts her hand on Eva's heart.*  
There, there—the heart, O God!—  
the poor young heart

Broken at last—all still—and no-  
thing left

To live for.

[*Falls on body of her sister.*]

*Harold*. Living—dead—She said  
'all still.

Nothing to live for.'

She—she knows me—now—  
(*A pause.*)

She knew me from the first, she jug-  
gled with me,

She hid this sister, told me she was  
dead—

I have wasted pity on her—not dead  
now—

No! acting, playing on me, both of  
them.

They drag the river for her! no, not  
they!

Playing on me—not dead now—a  
swoon—a scene—

Yet—how she made her wail as for  
the dead!

*Enter MILLY.*

*Milly*. Please, Mister 'Arold.

*Harold* (roughly). Well?

*Milly*. The owd man's coom'd agean  
to 'issen, an' wants

To hev a word wi' ye about the mar-  
riage.

*Harold*. The what?

*Milly*. The marriage.

*Harold*. The marriage?

*Milly*. Yeäs, the marriage.

Granny says marriages be maäde i'  
eaven.

*Harold*. She lies! They are made in  
hell. Child, can't you see?

Tell them to fly for a doctor.

*Milly*. O, law—yeäs, Sir.  
I'll run fur 'im mysen.

*Harold*. All silent there,  
Yes, deathlike! Dead? I dare not

look. If dead,

Were it best to steal away, to spare  
myself,

And her too, pain, pain, pain?

My curse on all  
This world of mud, on all its idiot  
gleams

Of pleasure, all the foul fatalities  
That blast our natural passions into  
pains!

*Enter DOBSON.*

*Dobson*. You, Master Hedgar,  
*Harold*, or whativer

They calls ye, for I warrants that ye  
goäs

By haäfe a scoor o' naämes — out o' the chaumber!

[*Dragging him past the body.*]

*Harold.* Not that way, man! Curse on your brutal strength!

I cannot pass that way.

*Dobson.* Out o' the chaumber!

I'll mash tha into nowt.

*Harold.* The mere wild-beast!

*Dobson.* Out o' the chaumber, ~~hang~~ tha!

*Harold.* Lout, churl, clown!

[*While they are shouting and struggling Dora rises and comes between them.*]

*Dora* (to *Dobson*). Peace, let him be; it is the chamber of Death!

Sir, you are tenfold more a gentleman,

A hundred times more worth a woman's love,

Than this, this — but I waste no words upon him:

His wickedness is like my wretchedness —

Beyond all language.

(To *Harold*.) You — you see her there!

Only fifteen when first you came on her, <sup>650</sup>

And then the sweetest flower of all the wolds,

So lovely in the promise of her May,  
So winsome in her grace and gaiety,  
So loved by all the village people here,

So happy in herself and in her home —

*Dobson* (agitated). Theer, theer! ha' done. I can't abear to see her. [*Exit.*]

*Dora.* A child, and all as trustful as a child!

Five years of shame and suffering broke the heart

That only beat for you; and he, the father,

Thro' that dishonor which you brought upon us, <sup>660</sup>

Has lost his health, his eyesight, even his mind.

*Harold* (covering his face). Enough!

*Dora.* It seem'd so; only there was left

A second daughter, and to her you came

Veiling one sin to act another.

*Harold.* No!

You wrong me there! hear, hear me!

I wish'd, if you — [*Pauses.*]

*Dora.* If I —

*Harold.* Could love me, could be brought to love me

As I loved you —

*Dora.* What then?

*Harold.* I wish'd, I hoped

To make, to make —

*Dora.* What did you hope to make?

*Harold.* 'T were best to make an end of my lost life.

O *Dora*, *Dora*!

*Dora.* What did you hope to make? <sup>670</sup>

*Harold.* Make, make! I cannot find the word — forgive it —

Amends.

*Dora.* For what? to whom?

*Harold.* To him, to you! [*Falling at her feet.*]

*Dora.* To him! to me!

No, not with all your wealth,  
Your land, your life! Out in the fiercest storm

That ever made earth tremble — he, nor I —

The shelter of *your* roof — not for one moment —

Nothing from *you*!

Sunk in the deepest pit of pauperism,  
Push'd from all doors as if we bore the plague,

Smitten with fever in the open field,  
Laid famine-stricken at the gates of Death — <sup>681</sup>

Nothing from *you*!

But she there — her last word  
Forgave — and I forgive you. If you ever

Forgive yourself, you are even lower and baser

Than even I can well believe you. Go!

[*He lies at her feet. Curtain falls.*]

## CROSSING THE BAR

SUNSET and evening star,  
And one clear call for me !  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark !  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark ;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.

## ADDITIONAL POEMS

**NOTE.** — The poems which follow include all those which have been omitted by the author from his latest revised editions, or never acknowledged by him. They are here printed because they have for the most part continued to have currency in America, although dropped from collective editions in England.

### TIMBUCTOO<sup>1</sup>

‘Deep in that lion-haunted inland lies  
A mystic city, goal of high emprise.’

CHAPMAN.

I stood upon the Mountain which o'er-  
looks  
The narrow seas, whose rapid inter-  
val  
Parts Afric from green Europe, when  
the Sun  
Had fall'n below th' Atlantic, and  
above  
The silent heavens were blench'd with  
faery light,  
Uncertain whether faery light or  
cloud,  
Flowing Southward, and the chasms  
of deep, deep blue  
Slumber'd unfathomable, and the stars  
Were flooded over with clear glory  
and pale.  
I gazed upon the sheeny coast beyond,  
There where the Giant of old Time  
infix'd  
The limits of his prowess, pillars  
high  
Long time erased from earth: even as  
the Sea  
When weary of wild inroad buildeth  
up  
Huge mounds whereby to stay his  
yeasty waves.  
And much I mused on legends quaint  
and old  
Which whilome won the hearts of all  
on earth

<sup>1</sup> A Poem which obtained the Chancellor's Medal at the Cambridge Commencement, MDCCCXIX. By A. TENNYSON, of Trinity College.

Toward their brightness, ev'n as flame  
draws air ;  
But had their being in the heart of  
man  
As air is th' life of flame: and thou  
wert then  
A center'd glory-circled memory.  
Divinest Atalantis, whom the waves  
Have buried deep, and thou of later  
name,  
Imperial Eldorado, roof'd with gold :  
Shadows to which, despite all shocks  
of change,  
All on-set of capricious accident,  
Men clung with yearning hope which  
would not die.  
As when in some great city where the  
walls  
Shake, and the streets with ghastly  
faces throng'd,  
Do utter forth a subterranean voice,  
Among the inner columns far retired  
At midnight, in the lone Acropolis,  
Before the awful Genius of the place  
Kneels the pale Priestess in deep faith,  
the while  
Above her head the weak lamp dips  
and winks  
Unto the fearful summoning without:  
Nathless she ever clasps the marble  
knees,  
Bathes the cold hands with tears, and  
gazeth on  
Those eyes which wear no light but  
that wherewith  
Her phantasy informs them.  
Where are ye,  
Thrones of the Western wave, fair  
Islands green ?  
Where are your moonlight halls, your  
cedarn glooms,  
The blossoming abysses of your hills ?

Your flowering capes, and your gold-  
 sanded bays  
 Blown round with happy airs of odor-  
 ous winds?  
 Where are the infinite ways, which,  
 seraph-trod,  
 Wound thro' your great Elysian soli-  
 tudes,  
 Whose lowest deeps were, as with vis-  
 ible love,  
 Fill'd with Divine effulgence, circum-  
 fused,  
 Flowing between the clear and polish'd  
 stems,  
 And ever circling round their emerald  
 cones  
 In coronals and glories, such as gird  
 The unfading foreheads of the Saints  
 in Heaven?  
 For nothing visible, they say, had  
 birth  
 In that blest ground, but it was play'd  
 about  
 With its peculiar glory. Then I raised  
 My voice and cried, 'Wide Afric, doth  
 thy Sun  
 Lighten, thy hills enfold a city as fair  
 As those which starr'd the night o' the  
 elder world?  
 Or is the rumour of thy Timbuctoo  
 A dream as frail as those of ancient  
 time?'  
 A curve of whitening, flashing, ebb-  
 ing light!  
 A rustling of white wings! the bright  
 descent  
 Of a young Seraph! and he stood be-  
 side me  
 There on the ridge, and look'd into  
 my face  
 With his unutterable, shining orbs.  
 So that with hasty motion I did veil  
 My vision with both hands, and saw  
 before me  
 Such colour'd spots as dance athwart  
 the eyes  
 Of those that gaze upon the noonday  
 Sun.  
 Girt with a zone of flashing gold be-  
 neath  
 His breast, and compass'd round about  
 his brow  
 With triple arch of ever-changing  
 bows,  
 And circled with the glory of living  
 light

And alternation of all hues, he stood.  
 'O child of man, why muse you  
 here alone  
 Upon the Mountain, on the dreams of  
 old  
 Which fill'd the earth with passing  
 loveliness,  
 Which flung strange music on the  
 howling winds,  
 And odours rapt from remote Para-  
 dise?  
 Thy sense is clogg'd with dull mortal-  
 ity;  
 Thy spirit fetter'd with the bond of  
 clay:  
 Open thine eyes and see.'  
 I look'd, but not  
 Upon his face, for it was wonderful  
 With its exceeding brightness, and the  
 light  
 Of the great Angel Mind which look'd  
 from out  
 The starry glowing of his restless eyes.  
 I felt my soul grow mighty, and my  
 spirit  
 With supernatural excitation bound  
 Within me, and my mental eye grew  
 large  
 With such a vast circumference of  
 thought,  
 That in my vanity I seem'd to stand  
 Upon the outward verge and bound  
 alone  
 Of full beatitude. Each failing  
 sense,  
 As with a momentary flash of light,  
 Grew thrillingly distinct and keen. I  
 saw  
 The smallest grain that dappled the  
 dark earth,  
 The indistinctest atom in deep air,  
 The Moon's white cities, and the opal  
 width  
 Of her small glowing lakes, her silver  
 heights  
 Unvisited with dew of vagrant cloud,  
 And the unsounded, undescended  
 depth  
 Of her black hollows. The clear gal-  
 axy  
 Shorn of its hoary lustre, wonderful,  
 Distinct and vivid with sharp points  
 of light,  
 Blaze within blaze, an unimagin'd  
 depth  
 And harmony of planet-girded suns

And moon-encircled planets, wheel in wheel,  
 Arch'd the wan sapphire. Nay — the hum of men,  
 Or other things talking in unknown tongues,  
 And notes of busy life in distant worlds  
 Beat like a far wave on my anxious ear.

A maze of piercing, trackless, thrilling thoughts,  
 Involving and embracing each with each,  
 Rapid as fire, inextricably link'd,  
 Expanding momentarily with every sight  
 And sound which struck the palpitating sense,  
 The issue of strong impulse, hurried through  
 The riven rapt brain; as when in some large lake  
 From pressure of descendant crags, which lapse  
 Disjointed, crumbling from their parent slope  
 At slender interval, the level calm  
 Is ridg'd with restless and increasing spheres  
 Which break upon each other, each th' effect  
 Of separate impulse, but more fleet and strong  
 Than its precursor, till the eye in vain  
 Amid the wild unrest of swimming shade  
 Dappled with hollow and alternate rise  
 Of interpenetrated arc, would scan  
 Definite round.

I know not if I shape  
 These things with accurate similitude  
 From visible objects, for but dimly now,  
 Less vivid than a half-forgotten dream,  
 The memory of that mental excellence  
 Comes o'er me, and it may be I entwine  
 The indecision of my present mind  
 With its past clearness, yet it seems to me  
 As even then the torrent of quick thought  
 Absorbed me from the nature of itself  
 With its own fleetness. Where is he that, borne

Adown the sloping of an arrowy stream,  
 Could link his shallop to the fleeting edge,  
 And muse midway with philosophic calm  
 Upon the wondrous laws which regulate  
 The fierceness of the bounding element?

My thoughts which long had grovelling'd in the slime  
 Of this dull world, like dusky worms which house  
 Beneath unshaken waters, but at once  
 Upon some earth-awakening day of Spring  
 Do pass from gloom to glory, and aloft  
 Winnow the purple, bearing on both sides  
 Double display of star-lit wings, which burn  
 Fan-like and fibred with intensest bloom;  
 Ev'n so my thoughts, erewhile so low, now felt  
 Unutterable buoyancy and strength  
 To bear them upward through the trackless fields  
 Of undefin'd existence far and free.

Then first within the South me thought I saw  
 A wilderness of spires, and chrystal pile  
 Of rampart upon rampart, dome on dome,  
 Illimitable range of battlement  
 On battlement, and the imperial height  
 Of canopy o'ercanopied.

Behind  
 In diamond light upsprung the dazzling peaks  
 Of Pyramids, as far surpassing earth's  
 As heaven than earth is fairer. Each aloft  
 Upon his narrow'd eminence bore globes  
 Of wheeling suns, or stars, or semblances  
 Of either, showering circular abyss  
 Of radiance. But the glory of the place  
 Stood out a pillar'd front of burnish'd gold,

Interminably high, if gold it were  
 Or metal more ethereal, and beneath  
 Two doors of blinding brilliance,  
     where no gaze  
 Might rest, stood open, and the eye  
     could scan,  
 Through length of porch and valve  
     and boundless hall,  
 Part of a throne of fiery flame, where-  
     from

The snowy skirting of a garment hung,  
 And glimpse of multitudes of multi-  
     tudes

That minister'd around it — if I saw  
 These things distinctly, for my human  
     brain

Stagger'd beneath the vision, and  
     thick night

Came down upon my eyelids, and I  
     fell.

With ministering hand he raised me  
     up:

Then with a mournful and ineffable  
     smile,

Which but to look on for a moment  
     fill'd

My eyes with irresistible sweet tears,  
 In accents of majestic melody,  
 Like a swoln river's gushings in still  
     night

Mingled with floating music, thus he  
     spake:

'There is no mightier Spirit than I  
     to sway

The heart of man: and teach him to  
     attain

By shadowing forth the Unattainable;  
 And step by step to scale that mighty  
     stair

Whose landing-place is wrapt about  
     with clouds

Of glory of heaven.<sup>1</sup> With earliest  
     light of Spring,

And in the glow of fallow Summertide,  
 And in red Autumn when the winds  
     are wild

With gambols, and when full-voiced  
     Winter roofs

The headland with inviolate white  
     snow,

I play about his heart a thousand  
     ways,

Visit his eyes with visions, and his  
     ears

<sup>1</sup> 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in  
 heaven is perfect.'

With harmonies of wind and wave  
     and wood, —

Of winds which tell of waters, and of  
     waters

Betraying the close kisses of the  
     wind —

And win him unto me: and few there  
     be

So gross of heart who have not felt  
     and known

A higher than they see: They with  
     dim eyes

Behold me darkling. Lo! I have  
     given thee

To understand my presence, and to  
     feel

My fulness; I have fill'd thy lips with  
     power.

I have raised thee nigher to the spheres  
     of heaven,

Man's first, last home: and thou with  
     ravish'd sense

Listenest the lordly music flowing  
     from

Th' illimitable years. I am the Spi-  
     rit,

The permeating life which courseth  
     through

All th' intricate and labyrinthine veins  
 Of the great vine of Fable, which,  
     outspread

With growth of shadowing leaf and  
     clusters rare,

Reacheth to every corner under hea-  
     ven,

Deep-rooted in the living soil of truth;  
 So that men's hopes and fears take  
     refuge in

The fragrance of its complicated  
     glooms,

And cool impleach'd twilights. Child  
     of man,

See'st thou yon river, whose translu-  
     cent wave,

Forth issuing from the darkness,  
     windeth through

The argent streets o' th' city, imaging  
 The soft inversion of her tremulous  
     domes,

Her gardens frequent with the stately  
     palm,

Her pagods hung with music of sweet  
     bells,

Her obelisks of ranged chrysolite,  
 Minarets and towers? Lo! how he

passeth by,

And gulphs himself in sands, as not  
enduring  
To carry through the world those  
waves, which bore  
The reflex of my city in their depths.  
Oh city! oh latest throne! where I  
was raised  
To be a mystery of loveliness  
Unto all eyes, the time is well-nigh  
come  
When I must render up this glorious  
home  
To keen Discovery: soon yon brilliant  
towers  
Shall darken with the waving of her  
wand;  
Darken, and shrink and shiver into  
huts,  
Black specks amid a waste of dreary  
sand,  
Low-built, mud-wall'd, barbarian set-  
tlements.  
How chang'd from this fair city!'  
Thus far the Spirit:  
Then parted heaven-ward on the wing:  
and I  
Was left alone on Calpe, and the moon  
Had fallen from the night, and all  
was dark!

## THE 'HOW' AND THE 'WHY'

?

I AM any man's suitor,  
If any will be my tutor:  
Some say this life is pleasant,  
Some think it speedeth fast,  
In time there is no present,  
In eternity no future,  
In eternity no past.  
We laugh, we cry, we are born, we  
die,  
Who will riddle me the *how* and the  
*why*?

The bulrush nods unto its brother.  
The wheatears whisper to each  
other:  
What is it they say? what do they  
there?  
Why two and two make four? why  
round is not square?  
Why the rock stands still, and the light  
clouds fly?

Why the heavy oak groans, and the  
white willows sigh?  
Why deep is not high, and high is not  
deep?  
Whether we wake, or whether we  
sleep?  
Whether we sleep, or whether we die?  
How you are you? why I am I?  
Who will riddle me the *how* and the  
*why*?

The world is somewhat; it goes on  
somehow:  
But what is the meaning of *then* and  
*now*?  
I feel there is something; but how  
and what?  
I know there is somewhat: but what  
and why?  
I cannot tell if that somewhat be I.  
The little bird pipeth — 'why?  
why?'  
In the summer woods when the sun  
falls low,  
And the great bird sits on the opposite  
bough,  
And stares in his face, and shouts  
'how? how?'  
And the black owl scuds down the  
mellow twilight,  
And chants 'how? how?' the whole  
of the night.

Why the life goes when the blood is  
spilt?  
What the life is? where the soul  
may lie?  
Why a church is with a steeple built:  
And a house with a chimney-pot?  
Who will riddle me the *how* and the  
what?  
Who will riddle me the *what* and  
the *why*?

## THE BURIAL OF LOVE

Hrs eyes in eclipse,  
Pale-cold his lips,  
The light of his hopes unfed,  
Mute his tongue,  
His bow unstrung  
With the tears he hath shed,  
Backward drooping his graceful  
head  
Love is dead:



His last arrow is sped ;  
 He hath not another dart ;  
 Go— carry him to his dark death-  
 bed ;  
 Bury him in the cold, cold heart —  
 Love is dead.

O truest love! art thou forlorn,  
 And unrevened? thy pleasant  
 wiles  
 Forgotten, and thine innocent  
 joy?

Shall hollow-hearted apathy,  
 The cruellest form of perfect scorn,  
 With languor of most hateful  
 smiles,

For ever write,  
 In the withered light  
 Of the tearless eye,  
 An epitaph that all may spy?  
 No! sooner she herself shall die.

For her the showers shall not fall,  
 Nor the round sun shine that shineth  
 to all;

Her light shall into darkness change;  
 For her the green grass shall not  
 spring,

Nor the rivers flow, nor the sweet  
 birds sing,

Till Love have his full revenge.

### TO —

SAINTED Juliet! dearest name!

If to love be life alone,

Divinest Juliet,

I love thee, and live; and yet  
 Love unreturned is like the fragrant  
 flame

Folding the slaughter of the sacrifice  
 Offered to gods upon an altar-  
 throne;

My heart is lighted at thine eyes,  
 Changed into fire, and blown about  
 with sighs.

### SONG

#### I

I' THE glooming light  
 Of middle night  
 So cold and white,

Worn Sorrow sits by the moaning  
 wave,

Beside her are laid

Her mattock and spade,

For she hath half delved her own deep  
 grave.

Alone she is there:

The white clouds drizzle: her hair falls  
 loose:

Her shoulders are bare;

Her tears are mixed with the beaded  
 dews.

#### II

Death standeth by;

She will not die;

With glazed eye

She looks at her grave: she cannot  
 sleep;

Ever alone

She maketh her moan:

She cannot speak: she can only weep,  
 For she will not hope.

The thick snow falls on her flake by  
 flake,

The dull wave mourns down  
 the slope,

The world will not change, and her  
 heart will not break.

### SONG

#### I

THE lintwhite and the throblecock

Have voices sweet and clear;

All in the blooméd May.

They from the bloomy brere

Call to the fleeting year,

If that he would them hear

And stay.

Alas! that one so beautiful

Should have so dull an ear!

#### II

Fair year, fair year, thy children call

But thou art deaf as death;

All in the blooméd May.

When thy light perisheth

That from thee issueth,

Our life evanisheth:

O, stay!

Alas! that lips so cruel-dumb

Should have so sweet a breath

## III

Fair year, with brows of royal love  
 Thou comest, as a king,  
 All in the blooméd May.  
 Thy golden largess fling,  
 And longer hear us sing;  
 Though thou art fleet of wing,  
 Yet stay.  
 Alas! that eyes so full of light  
 Should be so wandering!

## IV

Thy locks are all of sunny sheen  
 In rings of gold yronne,<sup>1</sup>  
 All in the blooméd May.  
 We pri'thee pass not on;  
 If thou dost leave the sun,  
 Delight is with thee gone.  
 O, stay!  
 Thou art the fairest of thy feres,  
 We pri'thee pass not on.

## SONG

## I

EVERY day hath its night:  
 Every night its morn:  
 Thorough dark and bright  
 Wingéd hours are borne;  
 Ah! welaway!  
 Seasons flower and fade;  
 Golden calm and storm  
 Mingle day by day.  
 There is no bright form  
 Doth not cast a shade—  
 Ah! welaway!

## II

When we laugh, and our mirth  
 Apes the happy vein,  
 We're so kin to earth,  
 Pleasaunce fathers pain—  
 Ah! welaway!  
 Madness laugheth loud:  
 Laughter bringeth tears:  
 Eyes are worn away  
 Till the end of fears  
 Cometh in the shroud,  
 Ah! welaway!

## III

All is change, woe or weal;  
 Joy is Sorrow's brother;  
 1 'His crispe hair in ringis was yronne.'  
 CHAUCER, *Knights Tale*.

Grief and gladness steal  
 Symbols of each other:  
 Ah! welaway!  
 Larks in heaven's cope  
 Sing: the culvers mourn  
 All the livelong day.  
 Be not all forlorn:  
 Let us weep in hope—  
 Ah! welaway!

## HERO TO LEANDER

O go not yet, my love!  
 The night is dark and vast;  
 The white moon is hid in her heaven  
 above,  
 And the waves climb high and  
 fast.  
 O, kiss me, kiss me, once again,  
 Lest thy kiss should be the last!  
 O kiss me ere we part;  
 Grow closer to my heart!  
 My heart is warmer surely than the  
 bosom of the main.  
 O joy! O bliss of blisses!  
 My heart of hearts art thou.  
 Come bathe me with thy kisses,  
 My eyelids and my brow.  
 Hark how the wild rain hisses,  
 And the loud sea roars below.  
 Thy heart beats through thy rosy  
 limbs,  
 So gladly doth it stir;  
 Thine eye in drops of gladness  
 swims.  
 I have bathed thee with the plea-  
 sant myrrh;  
 Thy locks are dripping balm;  
 Thou shalt not wander hence to-  
 night,  
 I'll stay thee with my kisses.  
 To-night the roaring brine  
 Will rend thy golden tresses;  
 The ocean with the morrow light  
 Will be both blue and calm;  
 And the billow will embrace thee with  
 a kiss as soft as mine.  
 No Western odors wander  
 On the black and moaning sea,  
 And when thou art dead, Leander,  
 My soul must follow thee!  
 O go not yet, my love!  
 Thy voice is sweet and low;

The deep salt wave breaks in above  
 Those marble steps below.  
 The turret-stairs are wet  
 That lead into the sea.  
 Leander! go not yet.  
 The pleasant stars have set:  
 O, go not, go not yet,  
 Or I will follow thee!

### THE MYSTIC

ANGELS have talked with him, and  
 showed him thrones:  
 Ye knew him not; he was not one of  
 ye,  
 Ye scorned him with an undiscerning  
 scorn:  
 Ye could not read the marvel in his  
 eye,  
 The still serene abstraction: he hath  
 felt  
 The vanities of after and before;  
 Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart  
 The stern experiences of converse  
 lives,  
 The linked woes of many a fiery  
 change  
 Had purified, and chastened, and made  
 free.  
 Always there stood before him, night  
 and day,  
 Of wayward vary-colored circum-  
 stance  
 The imperishable presences serene,  
 Colossal, without form, or sense, or  
 sound,  
 Dim shadows but unwaning pres-  
 ences  
 Fourfaced to four corners of the sky:  
 And yet again, three shadows, front-  
 ing one,  
 One forward, one respectant, three  
 but one;  
 And yet again, again and evermore,  
 For the two first were not, but only  
 seemed,  
 One shadow in the midst of a great  
 light,  
 One reflex from eternity on time,  
 One mighty countenance of perfect  
 calm,  
 Awful with most invariable eyes.  
 For him the silent congregated hours,  
 Daughters of time, divinely tall, be-  
 neath

Severe and youthful brows, with shin-  
 ing eyes  
 Smiling a godlike smile (the innocent  
 light  
 Of earliest youth pierced through and  
 through with all  
 Keen knowledges of low-embowed  
 eld)  
 Upheld, and ever hold aloft the cloud  
 Which droops low-hung on either gate  
 of life,  
 Both birth and death: he in the centre  
 fixt,  
 Saw far on each side through the  
 grated gates  
 Most pale and clear and lovely dis-  
 tances.  
 He often lying broad awake, and  
 yet  
 Remaining from the body, and apart  
 In intellect and power and will, hath  
 heard  
 Time flowing in the middle of the  
 night,  
 And all things creeping to a day of  
 doom.  
 How could ye know him? Ye were  
 yet within  
 The narrower circle: he had wellnigh  
 reached  
 The last, which with a region of white  
 flame,  
 Pure without heat, into a larger air  
 Upburning, and an ether of black blue,  
 Investeth and ingirds all other lives.

### THE GRASSHOPPER

#### I

VOICE of the summer wind,  
 Joy of the summer plain,  
 Life of the summer hours  
 Carol clearly, bound along.  
 No Tithon thou as poets feign  
 (Shame fall 'em, they are deaf and  
 blind),  
 But an insect lithe and strong,  
 Bowing the seeded summer flowers.  
 Prove their falsehood and thy quar-  
 rel,  
 Vaulting on thine airy feet.  
 Clap thy shielded sides and carol,  
 Carol clearly, chirrup sweet.  
 Thou art a mailed warrior in youth and  
 strength complete:

Armed cap-a-pie  
Full fair to see;  
Unknowing fear,  
Undreading loss,  
A gallant cavalier,  
*Sans peur et sans reproche,*  
In sunlight and in shadow,  
The Bayard of the meadow.

II

I would dwell with thee,  
Merry grasshopper,  
Thou art so glad and free,  
And as light as air;  
Thou hast no sorrow or tears,  
Thou hast no compt of years,  
No withered immortality,  
But a short youth sunny and free.  
Carol clearly, bound along,

Soon thy joy is over,  
A summer of loud song,  
And slumbers in the clover.  
What hast thou to do with evil  
In thine hour of love and revel,  
In thy heat of summer pride,  
Pushing the thick roots aside  
Of the singing flowered grasses,  
That brush thee with their silken  
tresses?

What hast thou to do with evil,  
Shooting, singing, ever springing  
In and out the emerald glooms,  
Ever leaping, ever singing,  
Lighting on the golden blooms?

LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGET-  
FULNESS

ERE yet my heart was sweet Love's  
tomb,  
Love labored honey busily.  
I was the hive, and Love the bee,  
My heart the honeycomb.  
One very dark and chilly night  
Pride came beneath and held a light.

The cruel vapors went through all,  
Sweet Love was withered in his cell:  
Pride took Love's sweets, and by a  
spell

Did change them into gall;  
And Memory, though fed by Pride,  
Did wax so thin on gall,  
Awhile she scarcely lived at all.  
What marvel that she died?

CHORUS

IN AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA, WRIT-  
TEN VERY EARLY

THE varied earth, the moving heaven,  
The rapid waste of roving sea,  
The fountain - pregnant mountains  
riven

To shapes of wildest anarchy,  
By secret fire and midnight storms  
That wander round their windy  
cones,  
The subtle life, the countless forms  
Of living things, the wondrous  
tones  
Of man and beast are full of  
strange  
Astonishment and boundless  
change.

The day, the diamonded night,  
The echo, feeble child of sound,  
The heavy thunder's griding might,  
The herald lightning's starry bound,  
The vocal spring of bursting bloom,  
The naked summer's glowing birth,  
The troublous autumn's sallow gloom,  
The hoarhead winter paving earth  
With sheeny white, are full of  
strange  
Astonishment and boundless  
change.

Each sun which from the centre flings  
Grand music and redundant fire,  
The burning belts, the mighty rings,  
The murmurous planets' rolling  
choir  
The globe-filled arch that, cleaving air,  
Lost in its own effulgence sleeps,  
The lawless comets as they glare,  
And thunder through the sapphire  
deeps  
In wayward strength, are full of  
strange  
Astonishment and boundless  
change.

LOST HOPE

You cast to ground the hope which  
once was mine:  
But did the while your harsh decree  
deplere,

Embalming with sweet tears the vacant shrine,  
My heart, where Hope had been and was no more.

So on an oaken sprout  
A goodly acorn grew ;  
But winds from heaven shook the acorn out,  
And filled the cup with dew.

### THE TEARS OF HEAVEN

HEAVEN weeps above the earth all night till morn,  
In darkness weeps as all ashamed to weep,  
Because the earth hath made her state forlorn  
With self-wrought evil of unnumbered years,  
And doth the fruit of her dishonor reap.  
And all the day heaven gathers back her tears  
Into her own blue eyes so clear and deep,  
And showering down the glory of lightsome day,  
Smiles on the Earth's worn brow to win her if she may.

### LOVE AND SORROW

O MAIDEN, fresher than the first green leaf  
With which the fearful springtide flecks the lea,  
Weep not, Almeida, that I said to thee  
That thou hast half my heart, for bitter grief  
Doth hold the other half in sovrantry.  
Thou art my heart's sun in love's crystalline :  
Yet on both sides at once thou canst not shine :  
Thine is the bright side of my heart, and thine  
My heart's day, but the shadow of my heart,  
Issue of its own substance, my heart's night

Thou canst not lighten even with *thy* light,  
All-powerful in beauty as thou art.  
Almeida, if my heart were substanceless,  
Then might thy rays pass through to the other side,  
So swiftly, that they nowhere would abide,  
But lose themselves in utter emptiness.  
Half-light, half-shadow, let my spirit sleep ;  
They never learned to love who never knew to weep.

### TO A LADY SLEEPING

O THOU whose fringed lids I gaze upon,  
Through whose dim brain the wingéd dreams are borne,  
Unroof the shrines of clearest vision,  
In honor of the silver-fleckéd morn ;  
Long hath the white wave of the virgin light  
Driven back the billow of the dreamful dark.  
Thou all unwittingly prolongest night,  
Though long ago listening the poiséd lark,  
With eyes dropt downward through the blue serene,  
Over heaven's parapet the angels lean.

### SONNET

COULD I outwear my present state of woe  
With one brief winter, and indue I' the spring  
Hues of fresh youth, and mightily outgrow  
The wan dark coil of faded suffering —  
Forth in the pride of beauty issuing  
A sheeny snake, the light of vernal bowers,  
Moving his crest to all sweet plots of flowers  
And watered valleys where the young birds sing ;  
Could I thus hope my lost delight's renewing,

I straightly would command the tears  
to creep  
From my charged lids; but inwardly  
I weep;  
Some vital heat as yet my heart is  
wooning;  
That to itself hath drawn the frozen  
rain  
From my cold eyes, and melted it  
again.

SONNET

THOUGH Night hath climbed her peak  
of highest noon,  
And bitter blasts the screaming autumn  
whirl,  
All night through archways of the  
bridgéd pearl,  
And portals of pure silver, walks the  
moon.  
Walk on, my soul, nor crouch to  
agony,  
Turn cloud to light, and bitterness to  
joy,  
And dross to gold with glorious al-  
chemy,  
Basing thy throne above the world's  
annoy.  
Reign thou above the storms of sor-  
row and ruth  
That roar beneath; unshaken peace  
hath won thee;  
So shalt thou pierce the woven glooms  
of truth;  
So shall the blessing of the meek be  
on thee;  
So in thine hour of dawn, the body's  
youth,  
An honorable eld shall come upon thee.

SONNET

SHALL the hag Evil die with child of  
Good,  
Or propagate again her loathéd kind,  
Thronging the cells of the diseased  
mind,  
Hateful with hanging cheeks, a with-  
ered brood,  
Though hourly pastured on the salient  
blood?  
Oh! that the wind which bloweth cold  
or heat

Would shatter and o'erbear the brazen  
beat  
Of their broad vans, and in the soli-  
tude  
Of middle space confound them, and  
blow back  
Their wild cries down their cavern  
throats, and slake  
With points of blast-borne hail their  
heated eyne!  
So their wan limbs no more might  
come between  
The moon and the moon's reflex in  
the night,  
Nor blot with floating shades the solar  
light.

SONNET

THE pallid thunder-stricken sigh for  
gain,  
Down an ideal stream they ever float,  
And sailing on Pactolus in a boat,  
Drown soul and sense, while wistfully  
they strain  
Weak eyes upon the glistening sands  
that robe  
The understream. The wise, could  
he behold  
Cathedraled caverns of thick-ribbéd  
gold  
And branching silvers of the central  
globe,  
Would marvel from so beautiful a  
sight  
How scorn and ruin, pain and hate  
could flow:  
But Hatred in a gold cave sits below;  
Pleached with her hair, in mail of  
argent light  
Shot into gold, a snake her forehead  
clips,  
And skins the color from her trem-  
bling lips.

LOVE

I

THOU, from the first, unborn, undying  
Love,  
Albeit we gaze not on thy glories  
near,  
Before the face of God didst breathe  
and move,

Though night and pain and ruin and  
 death reign here.  
 Thou foldest, like a golden atmos-  
 phere,  
 The very throne of the eternal God:  
 Passing through thee the edicts of his  
 fear  
 Are mellowed into music, borne abroad  
 By the loud winds, though they up-  
 rend the sea,  
 Even from its central deeps: thine  
 empery  
 Is over all; thou wilt not brook eclipse;  
 Thou goest and returnest to His lips  
 Like lightning: thou dost ever brood  
 above  
 The silence of all hearts, unutterable  
 Love.

## II

To know thee is all wisdom, and old  
 age  
 Is but to know thee: dimly we behold  
 thee  
 Athwart the veils of evils which in-  
 fold thee.  
 We beat upon our aching hearts in  
 rage;  
 We cry for thee; we deem the world  
 thy tomb.  
 As dwellers in lone planets look upon  
 The mighty disk of their majestic sun,  
 Hollowed in awful chasms of wheeling  
 gloom,  
 Making their day dim, so we gaze on  
 thee.  
 Come, thou of many crowns, white-  
 robéd Love,  
 Oh! rend the veil in twain: all men  
 adore thee;  
 Heaven crieth after thee; earth wait-  
 eth for thee;  
 Breathe on thy wingéd throne, and it  
 shall move  
 In music and in light o'er land and sea.

## III

And now—methinks I gaze upon  
 thee now,  
 As on a serpent in his agonies  
 Awe-stricken Indians; what time laid  
 low  
 And crushing the thick fragrant reeds  
 he lies,  
 When the new year warm-breathéd  
 on the Earth,

Waiting to light him with her purple  
 skies,  
 Calls to him by the fountain to uprise.  
 Already with the pangs of a new birth  
 Strain the hot spheres of his convulséd  
 eyes,  
 And in his writhings awful hues begin  
 To wander down his sable-sheeny  
 sides,  
 Like light on troubled waters: from  
 within  
 Anon he rusheth forth with merry din,  
 And in him light and joy and strength  
 abides;  
 And from his brows a crown of living  
 light  
 Looks through the thick-stemmed  
 woods by day and night.

## ENGLISH WAR-SONG

Who fears to die? Who fears to die?  
 Is there any here who fears to die?  
 He shall find what he fears; and none  
 shall grieve  
 For the man who fears to die;  
 But the withering scorn of the many  
 shall cleave  
 To the man who fears to die.

## CHORUS.

Shout for England!  
 Ho! for England!  
 George for England!  
 Merry England!  
 England for aye!

The hollow at heart shall crouch  
 forlorn,  
 He shall eat the bread of common  
 scorn;  
 It shall be steeped in the salt, salt  
 tear,  
 Shall be steeped in his own salt  
 tear:  
 Far better, far better he never were  
 born  
 Than to shame merry England here.  
 CHO.—Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy;  
 Hark! he shouteth—the ancient  
 enemy!  
 On the ridge of the hill his banners  
 rise;

They stream like fire in the skies;  
Hold up the Lion of England on high  
Till it dazzle and blind his eyes.

CHO. — Shout for England! etc.

Come along! we alone of the earth  
are free;

The child in our cradles is bolder  
than he;

For where is the heart and strength  
of slaves?

Oh! where is the strength of slaves?  
He is weak! we are strong: he a  
slave, we are free;

Come along! we will dig their  
graves.

CHO. — Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy;  
Will he dare to battle with the free?  
Spur along! spur amain! charge to  
the fight:

Charge! charge to the fight!  
Hold up the Lion of England on high!  
Shout for God and our right!

CHO. — Shout for England! etc.

### NATIONAL SONG

THERE is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no hearts like English hearts,  
Such hearts of oak as they be.  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no men like Englishmen,  
So tall and bold as they be.

#### CHORUS.

For the French the Pope may shrive  
'em.  
For the devil a whit we heed 'em:  
As for the French, God speed 'em  
Unto their heart's desire,  
And the merry devil drive 'em  
Through the water and the fire.

#### FULL CHORUS.

Our glory is our freedom,  
We lord it o'er the sea;  
We are the sons of freedom,  
We are free.

There is no land like England,  
Where'er the light of day be;

There are no wives like English wives,  
So fair and chaste as they be.

There is no land like England,  
Where'er the light of day be;

There are no maids like English maids,  
So beautiful as they be.

CHO. — For the French, etc.

### DUALISMS

Two bees within a crystal flowerbell  
rockéd,

Hum a love-lay to the west-wind at  
noontide.

Both alike, they buzz together,  
Both alike, they hum together,  
Through and through the flowered  
heather.

Where in a creeping cove the wave  
unshockéd

Lays itself calm and ~~side~~ side.  
Over a stream two birds of glancing  
feather

Do woo each other, carolling to-  
gether.

Both alike, they glide together,  
Side by side;

Both alike, they sing together,  
Arching blue-glosséd necks beneath  
the purple weather.

Two children lovelier than Love adown  
the lea are singing,

As they gambol, lily-garlands ever  
stringing:

Both in blossom-white silk are  
frockéd:

Like, unlike, they roam together  
Under a summer vault of golden  
weather:

Like, unlike, they sing together  
Side by side,

Mid-May's darling golden-lockéd,  
Summer's tanling diamond-eyed.

### THE SEA FAIRIES<sup>1</sup>

SLOW sailed the weary mariners, and  
<sup>saw</sup>

Between the green brink and the run-  
ning foam

White limbs unrobéd in a crystal  
air,

<sup>1</sup> Original form. See page 18.



Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms  
 proct  
 To little harps of gold: and while they  
 mused,  
 Whispering to each other half in  
 fear,  
 Shrill music reached them on the mid-  
 dle sea.

## SONG.

Whither away, whither away,  
 whither away? Fly no more:  
 Whither away wi' the singing sail?  
 whither away wi' the oar?  
 Whither away from the high green  
 field and the happy blossoming  
 shore?  
 Weary mariners, hither away,  
 One and all, one and all,  
 Weary mariners, come and play;  
 We will sing to you all the day;  
 Furl the sail and the foam will  
 fall  
 From the prow! One and all,  
 Furl the sail! Drop the oar!  
 Leap ashore,  
 Know danger and trouble and toil  
 no more.  
 Whither away wi' the sail and the  
 oar?

Drop the oar,  
 Leap ashore,  
 Fly no more!  
 Whither away wi' the sail? whither  
 away wi' the oar?  
 Day and night to the billow the  
 fountain calls:  
 Down shower the gambolling water-  
 falls  
 From wandering over the lea;  
 They freshen the silvery-crimson  
 shells,  
 And thick with white bells the  
 clover-hill swells  
 High over the full-toned sea.  
 Merrily carol the revelling gales  
 Over the islands free:  
 From the green seabanks the rose  
 down-trails  
 To the happy brimmed sea.

Come hither, come hither and be our  
 lords,  
 For merry brides are we:

We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak  
 sweet words.  
 Oh listen, listen, your eyes shall  
 glisten  
 With pleasure and love and rev-  
 elry;  
 Oh listen, listen, your eyes shall  
 glisten,  
 When the clear sharp twang of the  
 golden chords  
 Runs up the ridged sea.  
 Ye will not find so happy a shore,  
 Weary mariners! all the world  
 o'er;  
 Oh! fly no more!  
 Harken ye, harken ye, sorrow shall  
 darken ye,  
 Danger and trouble and toil no  
 more;  
 Whither away?  
 Drop the oar;  
 Hither away,  
 Leap ashore;  
 Oh fly no more — no more:  
 Whither away, whither away, whither  
 away with the sail and the  
 oar?

## Οἱ βέλους

## I

ALL thoughts, all creeds, all dreams  
 are true,  
 All visions wild and strange;  
 Man is the measure of all truth  
 Unto himself. All truth is change.  
 All men do walk in sleep, and all  
 Have faith in that they dream:  
 For all things are as they seem to  
 all,  
 And all things flow like a stream.

## II

There is no rest, no calm, no pause,  
 Nor good nor ill, nor light nor  
 shade,  
 Nor essence nor eternal laws:  
 For nothing is, but all is made.  
 But if I dream that all these are,  
 They are to me for that I dream;  
 For all things are as they seem to  
 all  
 And all things flow like a stream.  
 Argal — this very opinion is only true  
 relatively to the flowing philosophers.

## SONNET

O BEAUTY, passing beauty! sweetest  
Sweet!

How canst thou let me waste my  
youth in sighs?

I only ask to sit beside thy feet.

Thou knowest I dare not look into  
thine eyes.

Might I but kiss thy hand! I dare not  
fold

My arms about thee — scarcely dare  
to speak.

And nothing seems to me so wild and  
bold,

As with one kiss to touch thy  
blesséd cheek.

Methinks if I should kiss thee, no con-  
trol

Within the thrilling brain could  
keep afloat

The subtle spirit. Even while I  
spoke,

The bare word KISS hath made my  
inner soul

To tremble like a lutestring, ere  
the note

Hath melted in the silence that it  
broke.

## THE HESPERIDES

"Hesperus and his daughters three,  
That sing about the golden tree."

*Comus.*

THE North-wind fall'n, in the new-  
starréd night

Zidonian Hanno, voyaging beyond

The hoary promontory of Soloe

Past Thymiaterion, in calméd bays,

Between the southern and the western  
Horn,

Heard neither warbling of the night-  
ingale,

Nor melody of the Libyan lotus flute  
Blown seaward from the shore; but

from a slope

That ran bloom-bright into the Atlan-  
tic blue,

Beneath a highland leaning down a  
weight

Of cliffs, and zoned below with cedar  
shade,

Came voices, like the voices in a  
dream,  
Continuous, till he reached the outer  
sea.

## SONG

## I

The golden apple, the golden apple,  
the hallowed fruit,

Guard it well, guard it warily,

Singing airily,

Standing about the charmed root.

Round about all is mute,

As the snow-field on the mountain-  
peaks,

As the sand-field at the mountain-foot.

Crocodiles in briny creeks

Sleep and stir not: all is mute.

If ye sing not, if ye make false mea-  
sure,

We shall lose eternal pleasure,

Worth eternal want of rest.

Laugh not loudly: watch the treasure

Of the wisdom of the West.

In a corner wisdom whispers. Five  
and three

(Let it not be preached abroad) make  
an awful mystery.

For the blossom unto threefold music  
bloweth;

Evermore it is born anew;

And the sap to threefold music flow-  
eth,

From the root

Drawn in the dark,

Up to the fruit,

Creeping under the fragrant bark,

Liquid gold, honeysweet, thro' and  
thro'.

Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,

Looking warily

Every way,

Guard the apple night and day,

Lest one from the East come and take  
it away.

## II

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch,  
watch, ever and aye,

Looking under silver hair with a sil-  
ver eye.

Father, twinkle not thy steadfast  
sight;

Kingdoms lapse, and climates change,  
and races die;

Honor comes with mystery ;  
 Hoarded wisdom brings delight.  
 Number, tell them over and number  
 How many the mystic fruit-tree holds  
 Lest the red-combed dragon slumber  
 Rolled together in purple folds.  
 Look to him, father, lest he wink, and  
 the golden apple be stol'n away,  
 For his ancient heart is drunk with  
 overwatchings night and day,  
 Round about the hallowed fruit-tree  
 curled —  
 Sing away, sing aloud evermore in the  
 wind, without stop,  
 Lest his scaled eyelid drop,  
 For he is older than the world.  
 If he waken, we waken,  
 Rapidly levelling eager eyes.  
 If he sleep, we sleep,  
 Dropping the eyelid over the eyes.  
 If the golden apple be taken,  
 The world will be overwise.  
 Five links, a golden chain, are we,  
 Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,  
 Bound about the golden tree.

## III

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch,  
 watch, night and day,  
 Lest the old wound of the world be  
 healed,  
 The glory unsealed,  
 The golden apple stolén away,  
 And the ancient secret revealed.  
 Look from west to east along :  
 Father, old Himala weakens, Cau-  
 casus is bold and strong.  
 Wandering waters unto wandering  
 waters call ;  
 Let them clash together, foam and fall.  
 Out of watchings, out of wiles,  
 Comes the bliss of secret smiles.  
 All things are not told to all.  
 Half-round the mantling night is  
 drawn,  
 Purple fringed with even and dawn.  
 Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening hat-  
 eth morn.

## IV

Every flower and every fruit the redo-  
 lent breath  
 Of this warm sea-wind ripeneth,  
 Arching the billow in his sleep ;  
 But the land-wind wandereth,  
 Broken by the highland-steep,

Two streams upon the violet deep ;  
 For the western sun and the western  
 star,  
 And the low west-wind, breathing  
 afar,  
 The end of day and beginning of night  
 Make the apple holy and bright ;  
 Holy and bright, round and full,  
 bright and blest,  
 Mellowed in a land of rest ;  
 Watch it warily day and night ;  
 All good things are in the west.  
 Till mid noon the cool east light  
 Is shut out by the tall hillbrow ;  
 But when the full-faced sunset yel-  
 lowly  
 Stays on the flowering arch of the  
 bough,  
 The luscious fruitage clustereth mel-  
 lowly,  
 Golden-kernelled, golden-cored,  
 Sunset-ripened above on the tree.  
 The world is wasted with fire and  
 sword,  
 But the apple of gold hangs over the  
 sea.  
 Five links, a golden chain are we,  
 Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,  
 Daughters three,  
 Bound about  
 The gnarled bole of the charmed tree.  
 The golden apple, the golden apple,  
 the hallowed fruit,  
 Guard it well, guard it warily,  
 Watch it warily,  
 Singing airily,  
 Standing about the charmed root.

ROSALIND<sup>1</sup>

AUTHOR'S NOTE. — Perhaps the follow-  
 ing lines may be allowed to stand as a sepa-  
 rate poem; originally they made part of  
 the text, where they were manifestly super-  
 fluous.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 Bold, subtle, careless Rosalind,  
 Is one of those who know no strife  
 Of inward woe or outward fear ;  
 To whom the slope and stream of  
 Life,  
 The life before, the life behind,  
 In the ear, from far and near,

<sup>1</sup> This poem (see p. 26) has been restored,  
 but *without* the Author's Note.

Chimeth musically clear.  
 My falcon-hearted Rosalind,  
 Full-sailed before a vigorous wind,  
 Is one of those who cannot weep  
 For others' woes, but overleap  
 All the petty shocks and fears.  
 That trouble life in early years,  
 With a flash of frolic scorn  
 And keen delight, that never falls  
 Away from freshness, self-upborne  
 With such gladness as, whenever  
 The fresh-flushing springtime calls  
 To the flooding waters cool,  
 Young fishes, on an April morn,  
 Up and down a rapid river,  
 Leap the little waterfalls  
 That sing into the pebbled pool.  
 My happy falcon, Rosalind,  
 Hath daring fancies of her own,  
 Fresh as the dawn before the day,  
 Fresh as the early sea-smell blown  
 Through vineyards from an inland  
 bay.  
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 Because no shadow on you falls,  
 Think you hearts are tennisballs  
 To play with, wanton Rosalind?

## SONG

WHO can say  
 Why To-day  
 To-morrow will be yesterday?  
 Who can tell  
 Why to smell  
 The violet recalls the dewy prime  
 Of youth and buried time?  
 The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

## SONNET

WRITTEN ON HEARING OF THE OUT-  
 BREAK OF THE POLISH INSURREC-  
 TION

Blow ye the trumpet, gather from  
 afar  
 The hosts to battle: be not bought  
 and sold.  
 Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the  
 bold;  
 Break through your iron shackles—  
 fling them far.  
 O for those days of Piast, ere the Czar

Grew to his strength among his des-  
 erts cold;  
 When even to Moscow's cupolas were  
 rolled  
 The growing murmurs of the Polish  
 war!  
 Now must your noble anger blaze out  
 more  
 Than when from Sobieski, clan by clan,  
 The Moslem myriads fell, and fled be-  
 fore—  
 Than when Zamoysky smote the Tar-  
 tar Khan;  
 Than earlier, when on the Baltic shore  
 Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

## O DARLING ROOM

## I

O DARLING room, my heart's delight,  
 Dear room, the apple of my sight,  
 With thy two couches soft and white,  
 There is no room so exquisite,  
 No little room so warm and bright,  
 Wherein to read, wherein to write.

## II

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,  
 And Oberwinter's vineyards green,  
 Musical Lurlei; and between  
 The hills to Bingen have I been,  
 Bingen in Darmstadt, where the  
 Rhene  
 Curves toward Mentz, a woody scene.

## III

Yet never did there meet my sight,  
 In any town to left or right,  
 A little room so exquisite,  
 With two such couches soft and white,  
 Not any room so warm and bright,  
 Wherein to read, wherein to write.

## TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH

You did late review my lays,  
 Crusty Christopher;  
 You did mingle blame and praise,  
 Rusty Christopher.  
 When I learnt from whom it came,  
 I forgave you all the blame,  
 Musty Christopher;  
 I could not forgive the praise,  
 Fusty Christopher.

## ON CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

THEREFORE your Halls, your ancient  
Colleges,  
Your portals statued with old kings  
and queens,  
Your gardens, myriad-volumed libra-  
ries,  
Wax-lighted chapels, and rich carven  
screens,  
Your doctors and your proctors, and  
your deans  
Shall not avail you, when the Day-  
beam sports  
New-risen o'er awaken'd Albion —  
No!  
Nor yet your solemn organ-pipes that  
blow  
Melodious thunders thro' your vacant  
courts  
At morn and eve — because your man-  
ner sorts  
Not with this age wherefrom ye stand  
apart —  
Because the lips of little children  
preach  
Against you, you that do profess to  
teach  
And teach us nothing, feeding not the  
heart.

NO MORE<sup>1</sup>

O SAD *No More!* O sweet *No  
More!*  
O strange *No More!*  
By a mossed brookbank on a stone  
I smelt a wildweed flower alone;  
There was a ringing in my ears,  
And both my eyes gushed out with  
tears.  
Surely all pleasant things had gone  
before,  
Low-buried fathom deep beneath with  
thee, NO MORE!

ANACREONTICS<sup>1</sup>

WITH roses musky-breathed,  
And drooping daffodilly,  
And silver-leaved lily,  
And ivy darkly-wreathed,  
I wove a crown before her,

For her I love so dearly,  
A garland for Lenora.  
With a silken cord I bound it.  
Lenora, laughing clearly  
A light and thrilling laughter,  
About her forehead wound it,  
And loved me ever after.

A FRAGMENT<sup>1</sup>

WHERE is the Giant of the Sun, which  
stood  
In the midnoon the glory of old  
Rhodes,  
A perfect Idol with profulgent brows  
Far-sheening down the purple seas to  
those  
Who sailed from Mizraim underneath  
the star  
Named of the Dragon — and between  
whose limbs  
Of brassy vastness broad-blown Argo-  
sies  
Drove into haven? Yet endure un-  
scathed  
Of changeful cycles the great Pyra-  
mids  
Broad-based amid the fleeting sands,  
and sloped  
Into the slumberous summer noon;  
but where,  
Mysterious Egypt, are thine obelisks  
Graven with gorgeous emblems undis-  
cerned?  
Thy placid Sphinxes brooding o'er the  
Nile?  
Thy shadowing Idols in the solitudes,  
Awful Memnonian countenances calm  
Looking athwart the burning flats,  
far off  
Seen by the high-necked camel on the  
verge  
Journeying southward? Where are  
thy monuments  
Piled by the strong and sunborn Ana-  
kim  
Over their crowned brethren ON and  
OPH?  
Thy Memnon when his peaceful lips  
are kist  
With earliest rays, that from his mo-  
ther's eyes  
Flow over the Arabian bay, no more

<sup>1</sup> From 'The Geni, a Literary Annual,' for 1831.

Breathes low into the charmed ears of  
morn  
Clear melody flattering the crisped  
Nile  
By columned Thebes. Old Memphis  
hath gone down:  
The Pharaohs are no more : somewhere  
in death  
They sleep with staring eyes and gilded  
lips,  
Wrapped round with spiced cerements  
in old grotts  
Rock-hewn and sealed for ever.

SONNET<sup>1</sup>

ME my own fate to lasting sorrow  
doometh:  
Thy woes are birds of passage, tran-  
sitary:  
Thy spirit, circled with a living  
glory,  
In summer still a summer joy resum-  
eth.  
Alone my hopeless melancholy gloom-  
eth,  
Like a lone cypress, through the  
twilight hoary,  
From an old garden where no flower  
bloometh,  
One cypress on an island promon-  
tory.  
But yet my lonely spirit follows thine,  
As round the rolling earth night fol-  
lows day:  
But yet thy lights on my horizon  
shine  
Into my night, when thou art far  
away.  
I am so dark, alas ! and thou so bright,  
When we two meet there's never per-  
fect light.

SONNET<sup>2</sup>

CHECK every outflash, every ruder  
sally  
Of thought and speech; speak low,  
and give up wholly  
Thy spirit to mild-minded Melan-  
choly ;

<sup>1</sup> From 'Friendship's Offering,' for 1832.<sup>2</sup> From 'The Englishman's Magazine,' for August, 1831.

This is the place. Through yonder  
poplar alley  
Below the blue-green river windeth  
slowly ;  
But in the middle of the sombre valley  
The crisped waters whisper musically,  
And all the haunted place is dark  
and holy.  
The nightingale, with long and low  
preamble,  
Warbled from yonder knoll of  
solemn larches,  
And in and out the woodbine's  
flowery arches  
The summer midges wove their wan  
ton gambol,  
And all the white-stemmed pine  
wood slept above —  
When in this valley first I told my  
love.

SONNET<sup>1</sup>

THERE are three things which fill my  
heart with sighs,  
And steep my soul in laughter (when  
I view  
Fair maiden-forms moving like melo-  
dies) —  
Dimples, roselips, and eyes of any hue.  
There are three things beneath the  
blessed skies  
For which I live — black eyes and  
brown and blue :  
I hold them all most dear ; but oh !  
black eyes,  
I live and die, and only die in you.  
Of late such eyes looked at me — while  
I mused,  
At sunset, underneath a shadowy  
plane,  
In old Bayona nigh the southern sea —  
From an half-open lattice looked at me.  
I saw no more — only those eyes — con-  
fused  
And dazzled to the heart with glorious  
pain.

## THE SKIPPING-ROPE

SURE never yet was antelope  
Could skip so lightly by.

<sup>1</sup> From 'The Yorkshire Literary Annual,' 1832.

Stand off, or else my skipping-rope  
 Will hit you in the eye.  
 How lightly whirls the skipping-rope !  
 How fairy-like you fly !  
 Go, get you gone, you muse and  
 mope —  
 I hate that silly sigh.  
 Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,  
 Or tell me how to die.  
 There, take it, take my skipping-rope,  
 And hang yourself thereby.

### THE NEW TIMON AND THE POETS<sup>1</sup>

We know him, out of Shakespeare's  
 art,  
 And those fine curses which he  
 spoke ;  
 The old Timon, with his noble heart,  
 That, strongly loathing, greatly  
 broke.

So died the Old : here comes the New.  
 Regard him : a familiar face :  
 I thought we knew him : What, it's  
 you,  
 The padded man — that wears the  
 stays —

Who killed the girls and thrilled the  
 boys  
 With dandy pathos when you wrote !  
 A Lion, you, that made a noise,  
 And shook a mane *en papillotes*.

And once you tried the Muses too ;  
 You failed, Sir : therefore now you  
 turn,  
 To fall on those who are to you  
 As Captain is to Subaltern.

But men of long-enduring hopes,  
 And careless what this hour may  
 bring,  
 Can pardon little would-be POPES  
 And BRUMMELS, when they try to  
 sting.

An Artist, Sir, should rest in Art,  
 And waive a little of his claim ;  
 To have the deep Poetic heart  
 Is more than all poetic fame.

<sup>1</sup> Published in 'Punch,' February 28,  
 1846, signed 'Alcibiades.'

But you, Sir, you are hard to please ;  
 You never look but half content ;  
 Nor like a gentleman at ease,  
 With moral breadth of temperament.

And what with spites and what with  
 fears,  
 You cannot let a body be :  
 It's always ringing in your ears,  
 'They call this man as good as *me*.'

What profits now to understand  
 The merits of a spotless shirt —  
 A dapper boot — a little hand —  
 If half the little soul is dirt ?

You talk of tinsel ! why, we see  
 The old mark of rouge upon your  
 cheeks.  
 You prate of Nature ! you are he  
 That spilt his life about the cliques.

A TIMON you ! Nay, nay, for shame :  
 It looks too arrogant a jest —  
 The fierce old man — to take his name,  
 You bandbox. Off, and let him rest.

### LINES<sup>1</sup>

HERE often, when a child I lay re-  
 clined,  
 I took delight in this locality.  
 Here stood the infant Ilion of the  
 mind,  
 And here the Grecian ships did seem  
 to be.  
 And here again I come, and only find  
 The drain-cut levels of the marshy  
 lea, —  
 Gray sea-banks and pale sunsets, —  
 dreary wind,  
 Dim shores, dense rains, and heavy-  
 clouded sea !

### STANZAS<sup>2</sup>

WHAT time I wasted youthful hours,  
 One of the shining winged powers,  
 Show'd me vast cliffs with crown of  
 towers.

<sup>1</sup> From 'The Manchester Athenæum  
 Album,' 1850.

<sup>2</sup> Contributed to 'The Keepsake,' an il-  
 lustrated annual, 1851.

As towards the gracious light I  
bow'd,  
They seem'd high palaces and proud,  
Hid now and then with sliding  
cloud.

He said, 'The labor is not small ;  
Yet winds the pathway free to all : —  
Take care thou dost not fear to  
fall !'

### BRITONS, GUARD YOUR OWN<sup>1</sup>

Rise, Britons, rise, if manhood be not  
dead ;  
The world's last tempest darkens over-  
head ;

The Pope has bless'd him ;  
The Church caress'd him ;  
He triumphs ; maybe we shall stand  
alone.  
Britons, guard your own.

His ruthless host is bought with plun-  
der'd gold,  
By lying priests the peasants' votes  
control'd.

All freedom vanish'd,  
The true men banish'd,  
He triumphs ; maybe we shall stand  
alone.  
Britons, guard your own.

Peace-lovers we — sweet Peace we all  
desire —

Peace-lovers we — but who can trust a  
liar ? —

Peace-lovers, haters  
Of shameless traitors,  
We hate not France, but this man's  
heart of stone.  
Britons, guard your own.

We hate not France, but France has  
lost her voice.

This man is France, the man they call  
her choice.

By tricks and spying,  
By craft and lying,  
And murder was her freedom over-  
thrown.

Britons, guard your own.

<sup>1</sup> From 'The Examiner,' January 31, 1852,  
and signed 'Merlin.'

'Vive l'Empereur' may follow by and  
by ;

'God save the Queen' is here a truer  
cry.

God save the Nation,  
The toleration,  
And the free speech that makes a Bri-  
ton known.

Britons, guard your own.

Rome's dearest daughter now is cap-  
tive France,  
The Jesuit laughs, and reckoning on  
his chance,

Would, unrelenting,  
Kill all dissenting,  
Till we were left to fight for truth  
alone.

Britons, guard your own.

Call home your ships across Biscayan  
tides,  
To blow the battle from their oaken  
sides.

Why waste they yonder  
Their idle thunder ?  
Why stay they there to guard a foreign  
throne ?

Seamen, guard your own.

We were the best of marksmen long  
ago,  
We won old battles with our strength,  
the bow.

Now practice, yeomen,  
Like those bowmen,  
Till your balls fly as their true shafts  
have flown.

Yeomen, guard your own.

His soldier-ridden Highness might in-  
cline  
To take Sardinia, Belgium, or the  
Rhine :

Shall we stand idle,  
Nor seek to bridle  
His rude aggressions, till we stand  
alone ?

Make their cause your own.

Should he land here, and for one hour  
prevail,  
There must no man go back to bear  
the tale :

No man to bear it —  
Swear it ! we swear it !



Although we fight the banded world  
alone,  
We swear to guard our own.

### ADDITIONAL VERSES<sup>1</sup>

TO 'GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.'

God bless our Prince and Bride!  
God keep their lands allied,  
God save the Queen!  
Clothe them with righteousness,  
Crown them with happiness,  
Them with all blessings bless,  
God save the Queen!

Fair fall this hallow'd hour,  
Farewell, our England's flower,  
God save the Queen!  
Farewell, first rose of May!  
Let both the peoples say,  
God bless thy marriage-day,  
God bless the Queen!

### THE WAR<sup>2</sup>

THERE is a sound of thunder afar,  
Storm in the South that darkens the  
day!

Storm of battle and thunder of war!  
Well if it do not roll our way.

Form! form! Riflemen, form!  
Ready, be ready to meet the  
storm!

Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen,  
form!

Be not deaf to the sound that warns!  
Be not gull'd by a despot's plea!  
Are figs of thistles, or grapes of  
thorns?

How should a despot set men Free?  
Form! form! Riflemen, form!  
Ready, be ready to meet the  
storm!

Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen,  
form!

Let your reforms for a moment go!  
Look to your butts, and take good  
aims!

<sup>1</sup> Written for the marriage of the Princess  
Royal of England with the Crown Prince  
of Prussia, January 25, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> From 'The London Times,' May 9, 1859.

Better a rotten borough or so  
Than a rotten fleet or a city in  
flames!

Form! form! Riflemen, form!  
Ready, be ready to meet the  
storm!

Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen,  
form!

Form, be ready to do or die!  
Form in Freedom's name and the  
Queen's!

True that we have a faithful ally,  
But only the devil can tell what he  
means.

Form! form! Riflemen, form!  
Ready, be ready to meet the  
storm!

Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen,  
form!

### THE RINGLET

'Your ringlets, your ringlets,  
That look so golden-gay,  
If you will give me one, but one,  
To kiss it night and day,  
Then never chilling touch of Time  
Will turn it silver-gray;  
And then shall I know it is all true  
gold

To flame and sparkle and stream as of  
old,  
Till all the comets in heaven are  
cold,

And all her stars decay.'  
'Then take it, love, and put it  
by;  
This cannot change, nor yet can I.'

### 2

'My ringlet, my ringlet,  
That art so golden-gay,  
Now never chilling touch of Time  
Can turn thee silver-gray;  
And a lad may wink, and a girl may  
hint,

And a fool may say his say;  
For my doubts and fears were all  
amiss,

And I swear henceforth by this and  
this,  
That a doubt will only come for a  
kiss,  
And a fear to be kiss'd away.'

'Then kiss it, love, and put it by ;  
If this can change, why so can I.'

II

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I kiss'd you night and day,  
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
You still are golden-gay,  
But Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
You should be silver-gray :  
For what is this which now I 'm  
told,  
I that took you for true gold,  
She that gave you 's bought and  
sold,  
Sold, sold.

2

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She blush'd a rosy red,  
When Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She clipt you from her head,  
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She gave you me, and said,  
'Come, kiss it, love, and put it by ;  
If this can change, why so can I.'  
O fie, you golden nothing, fie,  
You golden lie.

8

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I count you much to blame  
For Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
You put me much to shame,  
So Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I doom you to the flame.  
For what is this which now I learn  
Has given all my faith a turn ?  
Burn, you glossy heretic, burn,  
Burn, burn.

LINES<sup>1</sup>

LONG as the heart beats life within her  
breast,  
Thy child will bless thee, guardian  
mother mild,  
And far away thy memory will be  
blest  
By children of the children of thy  
child.

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1864, at the request of the Queen, for inscription on the statue of the Duchess of Kent at Frogmore ; printed in 'The Court Journal,' March 19, 1864.

1865-1866<sup>1</sup>

I STOOD on a tower in the wet,  
And New Year and Old Year met,  
And winds were roaring and blowing,  
And I said, 'O years that meet in  
tears,  
Have ye aught that is worth the know-  
ing ?  
Science enough and exploring,  
Wanderers coming and going,  
Matter enough for deploring,  
But aught that is worth the know-  
ing ?'  
Seas at my feet were flowing,  
Waves on the shingle pouring,  
Old Year roaring and blowing,  
And New Year blowing and roaring.

STANZA<sup>2</sup>

NOT he that breaks the dams, but  
he  
That thro' the channels of the State  
Convoys the people's wish, is great ;  
His name is pure, his fame is free.

COMPROMISE<sup>3</sup>

STEERSMAN, be not precipitate in thy  
act  
Of steering, for the river here, my  
friend,  
Parts in two channels, moving to  
one end,  
This goes straight forward to the cat-  
aract,  
That streams about the bend ;  
But tho' the cataract seem the nearer  
way,  
Whate'er the crowd on either bank  
may say,  
Take thou the bend, 't will save thee  
many a day.

<sup>1</sup> 'Good Words,' March, 1868.

<sup>2</sup> Contributed to the 'Shakespearean Show Book,' printed in March, 1884, for a fair got up for the benefit of the Chelsea Hospital for Women.

<sup>3</sup> Addressed to Mr. Gladstone, then Prime Minister, in November, 1884, when the Franchise Bill was being discussed in the House of Lords ; and afterwards printed in the 'Pall Mall Gazette.'

EXPERIMENT IN SAPPHIC  
METRE<sup>1</sup>

Faded every violet, all the roses;  
Gone the glorious promise, and the  
victim  
Broken in the anger of Aphrodite  
Yields to the victor.

<sup>1</sup> Contributed to Professor Jebb's 'Primer  
of Greek Literature,' 1877.

STANZA<sup>1</sup>

We lost you for how long a time,  
True Pearl of our poetic prime!  
We found you, and you gleam re-  
set  
In Britain's lyric coronet.

<sup>1</sup> Prefatory, in 1891, to 'Pearl,' an Eng-  
lish poem of the 14th century, edited by  
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